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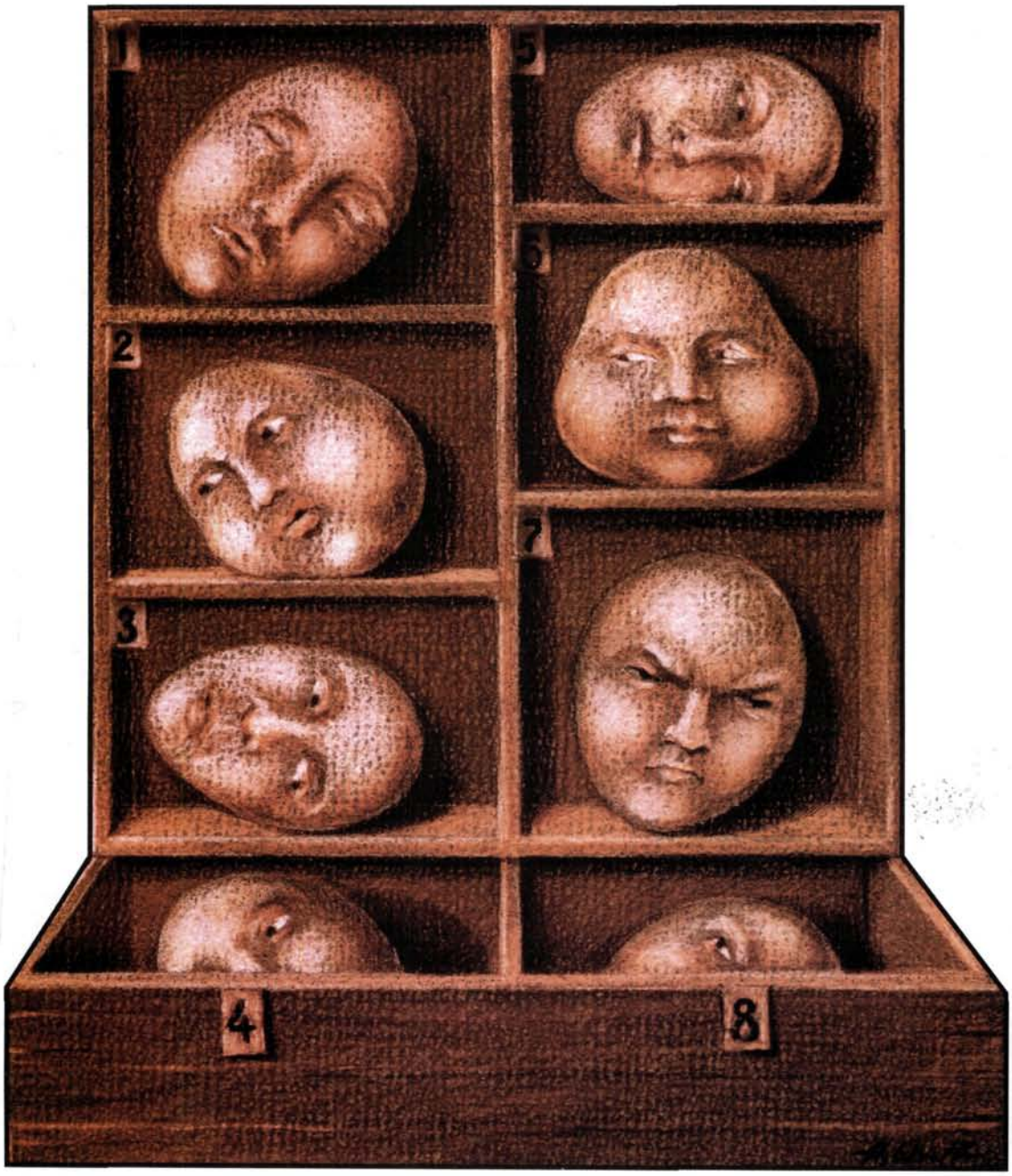
The End of Individualism



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Bill Cash, MP, on the Euro Parliament

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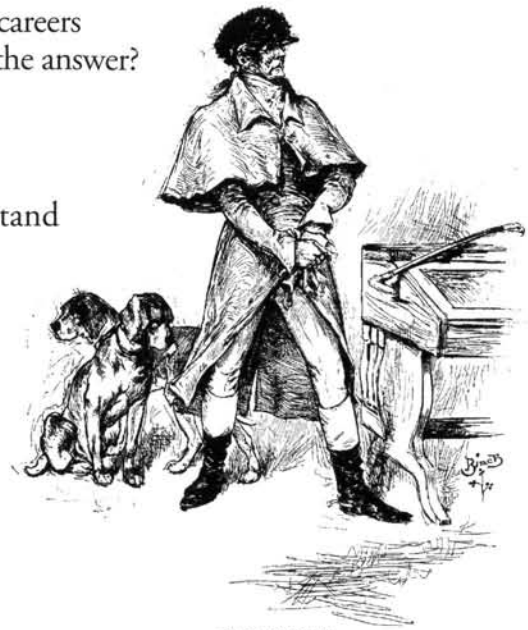

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Chronicles

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A publication of The Rockford Institute.
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Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.

U.S.A. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Rt. 250 Milan, Ohio 44848-9705

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Chronicles (ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $39.00 (foreign subscriptions add $12 for surface delivery, $48 for Air Mail) per year by The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Preferred periodical postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Chronicles*, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE
Vol. 23, No. 10 October 1999
Printed in the United States of America

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On *Chronicles*, Citizenship, and John McCain

Subscribing to your magazine has been an event in my life. It is surely intellectually challenging to me, meaning I don't know exactly where you stand. I thought you were far right and impishly mailed a copy on the New World Order to a friend who claims to be a socialist and gets angry about prosperous patricians and the suffering poor. My friend was elated by the issue. I sent a gift subscription to another friend who is an immigrant and a culture lover. His comments implied that you are cultural, yes, but also political.

To be fair, I wanted to praise you before I get picky. Bill Kauffman ("The Anti-American Century," August) describes Sen. John McCain as a military brat born in the Panama Canal Zone. The U.S. Constitution requires a president to be native-born, but the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act of 1952 laid down the rules for U.S. citizenship of people born in the Canal Zone. It gave those with at least one American parent a claim to U.S. citizenship, but the person had to "elect" to be an American, even if both parents were Americans. One example is Bishop McGrath of Panama, whose mother was Panamanian. He chose to travel to the United States on a Panamanian passport. (I know, I signed his visa.) Which gets me to an important point which Mr. Kauffman did not raise: Why (or perhaps, How) is Senator McCain running for president of the United States?

Thank you for a magazine that stretches my mind. Your predilection for French expressions doesn't slow me down, but the German is gibberish although I was in the Occupation.

—Francis J. Barrett
Fernandina Beach, FL

Mr. Kauffman Replies:

Good question. Citizenship law is gibberish to me, but McCain's foreign birth is one of many reasons to vote against this Serb-killing, skirt-chasing, staff-abusing, Keating-servicing, rootless blowhard and pin-up boy of the *New York Times*.

On Mental Illness and the Frankfurt School

I note with some interest the reference in Justin Raimondo's "Matthew Shepard and the Thought Police" (*Vital Signs*, July) to *The Authoritarian Personality*, Theodor Adorno, and the American Jewish Committee. (There was Rockefeller money, too, in that study.)

Mr. Raimondo undoubtedly knows (although your readers may not) that the study was a product of the neo-Marxist/neo-Freudian Institute for Social Research, which was established by Karl Radek and the Comintern in Frankfurt in 1933 and transplanted courtesy of John Dewey and Robert McIver to Columbia, where it took over Teachers College and the National Education Association, and is directly responsible for the cultural and academic debasement of this country. The Adorno study found all Americans disagreeing with the Frankfurt School "mentally ill"—but this has progressed to a "finding" that almost all American children are mentally sick. Teachers in kindergarten and the early elementary grades are now at work applying drugs like Ritalin and Prozac to children and young people. Almost nothing has been said about the fact that most of those involved in violent school crime were under the influence of such drugs.

—Ralph de Toledano
Washington, D.C.

On Scientism and John Rawls

Antony Flew's fine essay on the infelicities of John Rawls' treatment of justice ("'Social' Justice Is Not Justice," July) would, I think, have benefited from calling attention to the fact that Rawls appears to have been influenced very much by a scientistic account of human character formation.

In *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls says that "The assertion that a man deserved the superior character that enables him to make the effort to cultivate his abilities is

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problematic; for his character depends in large part upon fortunate family and social circumstances for which he can claim no credit." Evidently Rawls does not believe any of us comes to deserve very much in life since, by his lights, our character, the source of our meritorious or virtuous (as well as vicious) conduct, is largely not of our own making. It is no surprise, then, that Rawls takes us all to be equal and so believes that no one ought to have a better go of it than anyone else unless such a policy advances the lot of us all.

This tribal view of human community life is what ultimately underlies Rawls' (and many other thinkers') preference for aggressive redistribution of benefits and harms in any human community.

In order to address this matter, it is necessary to explore whether human beings are free to make significant choices in their lives, choices that will make a serious difference in whether they achieve various advantages for themselves and their loved ones. In short, we need to settle the issue of freedom of the will, a topic very rarely addressed by those who pursue the study of politics.

—Tibor R. Machan
Orange, CA

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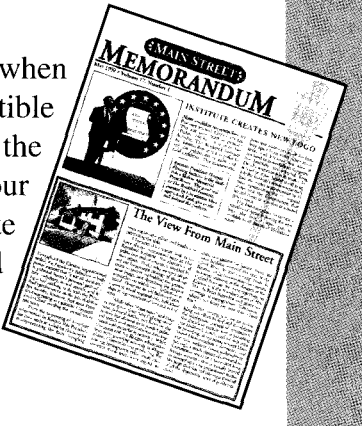

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CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

MODERN EGALITARIANISM can be mind-numbing, as two recent incidents—the first in the Southwest, the second in the Midwest—show.

The first, of course, is the shooting spree at Columbine High School. Most of Dylan Klebold's and Eric Harris's victims were either Christians or athletes. The former were murdered simply because they were Christians. The killers asked one pretty girl if she believed in God; when she answered that she did, they assassinated her. The athletes were selected because they wore a distinctive cap and generally had more privileges at school than the murderers.

Harris and Klebold were an extreme expression of the political correctness which has become central to the average high-school curriculum in recent years. Their actions (and Harris's website) suggest that they were crusading egalitarians. They were willing to kill anyone who wished to distinguish himself from the herd. The fact that they were even willing to kill a black who was bent on improving himself indicates that they may have taken note of the fact that blacks as a group now have special privileges.

If the events at Columbine High School represented an extreme acceptance of egalitarianism, the actions of college student Benjamin Nathaniel Smith in Illinois and Indiana over the Fourth of July weekend may have represented its extreme rejection. He killed a Christian Korean, a Christian black, and wounded nine other men, at least one of them a Christian. Six of those whom he injured were Orthodox Jews.

Like Klebold and Harris, he killed Christians; also like them, he demanded the right to speak his mind, however immoral his utterings may be considered. When campus authorities attempted to upbraid him for handing out his pamphlets, he continually chattered about the First Amendment in a manner similar to that of the Fifth Amendment communists of the late 40's and early 50's.

In high school, he was quieter, even read philosophy. But prior to graduation, he proclaimed himself a Muslim and inscribed in a yearbook the words uttered by Lincoln's assassin: *Sic semper tyrannis*. After he entered college, however, he began to dwell upon the double standards inherent in contemporary civil-rights legal practices. He became inflamed. He met Matthew Hale, head of the World

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Church of the Creator, an anti-Christian, anti-Jewish, anti-non-white religion. Hale was a law-school graduate who had been denied the right to practice law in Illinois because of his racist beliefs. Smith's promotional zeal won him the title of "1998 Creator of the Year."

After being forced to quit the Champaign-Urbana campus of the University of Illinois because of charges that he had beaten his girlfriend, Smith entered the Bloomington campus in 1998. There, he deliberately put himself in harm's way. Switching his major from computer science to criminal justice, he entered a field of study known for its extreme liberal orientation on that campus.

Then came that fateful Friday in July. That day, Matt Hale's latest attempt to become a lawyer had been rebuffed. At the hearing, Smith had testified that, without Hale's advice, he would have been in jail. The ruling could well have been the final straw in his slender hold on sanity. After Smith's suicide, Hale received a letter announcing that Smith had left the Church of the Creator in April 1999 "because I am unable and unwilling to follow a legal resolution of Values." When his ex-girlfriend realized who the shooter was, she said that "this is his Independence day from the government, from everything."

(Incidentally, Hale's rejection by the bar because of his beliefs was not something that was rigged just to fit a racist like him. Back in the McCarthy era, an applicant was repeatedly denied admission to the bar because he held that the Declaration of Independence granted the right of revolution.)

Egalitarianism has been the inspiration for political murder since the French Revolution. It would be tempting to conclude that Harris and Klebold had accepted an abstract proposition which Smith in turn rejected. But in a more fundamental way, they both embraced the same notion. If the two teenagers hated Christians for not accepting their strange habits as merely another alternative lifestyle and despised the athletes because the latter enjoyed a more privileged lifestyle, Smith thought it outrageous, in a land which prided itself on equal consideration, that Matt Hale's petition to become a lawyer was not regarded the same way as that of a conservative Republican. Smith probably would have sneered at anyone who tried to say that freedom of speech cannot exist long without reciprocity, and that those who exercise that right without granting it to others drag down American society more than any welfare queen ever did. For their part, Klebold and Harris would have considered as "trite" anyone who tried to tell them that freedom of speech includes the freedom to disapprove—even of them. In a sense, Smith was a continuation of the anti-McCarthy movement of the 50's: He believed that authorities should not make "value judgments" with respect to the unlawful consequences of the ideas of a political dissenter (in other words, they should never reject such an applicant even when they may legally do so). The perpetrators were in different ways victims of the present educational system—but that system did not make them first-degree murderers. Most dissenters still remain within the law.

—*Peter Erickson*

CIVIL WAR REENACTMENTS *are more popular today than at any time in the 135 years since "the late unpleasantness" came to an end. Recent news stories, however, have been less than favorable to reenactors. In these remarks, delivered to 14,000 spectators of the 1999 Gettysburg reenactment, Ronald F. Maxwell, writer and director of the motion picture* Gettysburg, *explains why.*

I've been going to reenactments for more than 20 years, so I've had a chance to observe this phenomenon up close.

In a time of all-encompassing and oppressive political correctness, when the ruling elites and their media acolytes control most of the information we get and tell us what to think, what opinions to hold, what to buy and what to wear, even when and where to go to war . . . there are some, the audacious and irascible few, who persist in thinking for themselves.

Just who are reenactors? The mainstream media has described them as weekend warriors, Civil War fanatics, even misfits who should, as they say, "get a life." What they really mean to say is "get *their* life," fit into *their* worldview—the New World Order.

In their worldview, which now dominates the academy as well as the media, all the old heroes are to be deconstructed, then discarded. Thomas Jefferson, we are told with sanctimonious relish, was a seriously flawed person who may have fathered offspring by one of his domestic slaves. Lee and his generals were part of the same corrupt bondage system. For these crimes, the generation of 1776 and their grandsons of the 1860's must be hollowed of their humanity and gutted of their greatness, brought down and reduced to the paltry, squalid place inhabited by more than a few present-day politicians and so-called leaders. Then, discredited, they are to be diminished and eventually deleted from our history books, except perhaps as footnotes to the revisionist history of America.

Why this attack on these two generations in particular? Could it be because these same elites want to stop us from looking up to men who questioned authority and fought for liberty? Who did so brilliantly and courageously? If they are to succeed in their goal of transforming citizens into consumers, to reduce us from those who would defend liberty to those whose only concern is for celebrity and fashion, they must teach us to avert our gaze from the likes of Washington and Jefferson, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, and Robert E. Lee.

What I admire most about reenactors is that they refuse to forget. They are not *weekend* warriors, for that implies frivolity and a lack of conviction. They are a living embodiment of an American spirit that is still alive and well despite pervasive and well-financed efforts to belittle, ridicule, marginalize, and neutralize it. They are warriors, as in Lee's first great series of victories, seven days a week.

There are still those among us who cherish the sacred memory of our ancestors, who value the traditions tested by the generations, whose lives vibrate yet in the distant chords of memory. These reenactments, entertaining as they are, fun as they are, are pathways between the generations, connecting old antagonists with new witnesses in an atmosphere of conciliation, compassion, and understanding.

Take from us our media, our universities; take from us our libraries and our books; take our newspapers and our textbooks—take it all. With malice towards none and charity for all, we here today will never forget. We here today will long remember.

—*Ronald F. Maxwell*

L'AFFAIRE LEWINSKY, most of us thought, ended with the escape of our President in the United States Senate. As a particularly sweltering July turned to

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August, though, "all Monica all the time" junkies got their best fix in months. First, Linda Tripp, who is either one of the most evil betrayers of all time or one of the most courageous and dedicated public servants in American history (depending on whether you are a fan of Bill Clinton or of Lucianne Goldberg), was indicted by a Maryland grand jury for unlawfully recording the telephone conversations she had with Miss Lewinsky. Then, a few days later, Miss Lewinsky was hospitalized following a traffic accident in California in which she rolled her Ford Bronco. In the meantime, Hillary Rodham Clinton revealed to a new celebrity-gossip magazine that her husband is "a hard dog to keep on the porch" and offered as an explanation for his infidelities that "He was so young, barely four, when he was scarred by abuse. . . . There was terrible conflict between his mother and grandmother. A psychologist told me that being in the middle of a conflict between two women is the worst possible situation." And finally, the "hard dog," the day before Mrs. Tripp was indicted, was ordered by Federal District Judge Susan Webber Wright to pay about $90,000 in penalties to Paula Jones's lawyers for the extra expenses they incurred because he had given false testimony in the case about his relationship with Miss Lewinsky. Just as Mr. Clinton was the first elected President to be impeached, he also became the first American chief executive ever to have been fined for acts clearly in violation of his constitutional duty to take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

Judge Wright's actions speak for themselves. Mrs. Clinton's comments are best analyzed by psychologists trained in the nuances of projection. A Freudian or, better still, an astrologer or a chaos theorist might be able to figure out why Monica would crash right after her erstwhile friend ("I hate Linda Tripp," Monica reportedly told Judge Starr's grand jury) was indicted. As this journal's legal affairs editor, however, I ought to have something to contribute with regard to Mrs. Tripp's indictment. But I have to admit that I'm baffled.

On some of its websites, the vast right-wing conspiracy (VRWC) which Mrs. Clinton early on blamed for the Paula Jones lawsuit and the gossip about the White House intern (since we now know that the problem was the President's mother and grandmother, should Mrs. Clinton retract her earlier statements as a means of clearing the air before her Senate campaign?) is attributing the Tripp indictment to retribution from—*mirabile dictu*—the First Lady and her purported friend Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the Democratic lieutenant governor of Maryland, the state where Tripp was indicted. Mrs. Tripp supported this theory in some deposition testimony she gave in a lawsuit recently filed by Judicial Watch. Tripp has retained as a lawyer one of the most prominent "whistleblower" attorneys in Washington, a man who literally wrote the book (*The Whistleblower Litigation Handbook*, 1990), Stephen M. Kohn, who lost no time in declaring that "The State of Maryland should not use its criminal laws to indict and destroy Linda Tripp . . . Any such indictment will have a chilling effect on witnesses who have the courage to document and report . . . official misconduct." Possibly reflecting somewhat the theories of the VRWC, Mr. Kohn stated that "Attempting to destroy Linda Tripp through the misuse of criminal processes is just plain wrong."

Mrs. Tripp could be subject to a possible five years in prison and/or a $10,000 fine on each of the two counts brought against her by the Maryland grand jury. If convicted, she would be the only person so far to suffer such a fate for crimes in connection with *l'affaire* Lewinsky, and there would be more than a little irony in the fact that the only person so singled out would be the one who actually made it possible for the presidential wrongdoing that led to his impeachment to be revealed.

That irony, I think, would be too much for the judge hearing the case, for the jury of 12 of Mrs. Tripp's peers, or for a court of appeals reviewing any possible convictions. The Maryland statute, which appears to be addressed at third parties who clandestinely "intercept" wire communications between others, was clearly not intended to be used to punish persons who record their own conversations with those seeking to implicate them in the commission of felonies. This will be Mrs. Tripp's defense, and Mr. Kohn will also point out that she not only used the recordings to protect herself, she also took them to federal authorities who believed them important enough to get the attorney general's permission to expand Judge Starr's investigation. Judge Starr saw that Mrs. Tripp was granted immunity from any liability under a similar federal anti-interception statute, and there are powerful arguments that the federal immunity should not be undercut by any state prosecutions. Since the conversation allegedly "intercepted" (can one "intercept" one's own conversation?) was an interstate one, there is even an argument that the proper jurisdiction is federal, not state, and the state criminal proceeding should therefore be dismissed. The chance of Mrs. Tripp actually serving time in Maryland for taping Miss Lewinsky is remote.

This should have been obvious to the Maryland authorities as well. The grand jury's action is not surprising (criminal lawyers are fond of stating that any half-

Book of Next Month

Our second offering in the Book of Next Month Club is Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt*. A frequently misunderstood tribute to the Upper Midwest—half savage critique, half affectionate appreciation—*Babbitt* bears witness to the triumph of the imagination.

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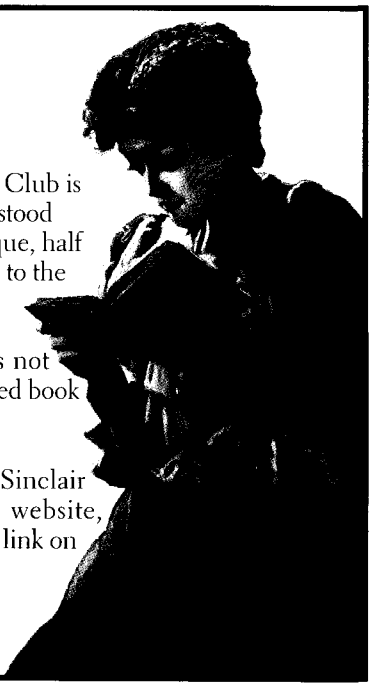

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decent prosecutor could get any grand jury to indict a ham sandwich), but the fact that prosecutors would choose to go forward with this weak case requires some sort of explanation. Partisan politics would do, of course, but while the prosecution is being conducted by a Democratic state official, Stephen Montanarelli, the proceeding appears to have been approved by Howard County State's Attorney Marna McLendon, a Republican. The case will probably be dismissed by the time you read this, but in the meantime, is it possible that the Democrats would like to see Tripp in trouble not only to punish her for tarnishing the Clinton presidency, but also to divert attention from the President's latest legal troubles at the hands of Judge Wright? Is it possible that the Republicans are delighted to see the Democrats caught in the awkward position of trying to punish a whistleblower, whose trial is likely to prove acutely embarrassing to Mrs. Clinton as she begins her run for the Senate?

—*Stephen B. Presser*

"Abortion kills children"

their signs say. They are the indefatigable pro-lifers (or "anti-choicers") who "peacefully" protest the barbaric practice of elective abortion in communities across America. Here in Rockford, they line up outside the Ft. Turner building (fittingly, an abandoned public school), carrying signs and sometimes more. While Dr. Richard Ragsdale celebrates the modern sacrament of death inside, on the outside a peculiar activity occurs. A grown man holds a baby doll in his hands and proceeds to stab it before women entering the clinic as well as before passersby (and their children). The doll gushes red "blood," as the meat-baster, filled with dyed liquid and concealed in the toy, is employed by the protester.

A colorful continuum of anti-abortionists has emerged from the Christian right. On one end are the dear ladies of the church auxiliary who hold signs at the annual "life chain" and volunteer as counselors at the crisis pregnancy center. On the other end are those who find abortionists in their crosshairs and squeeze the trigger, believing that they are—in the spirit of Dietrich Bonhoeffer—stopping the hands of an assassin. Between the two are those whose civil disobedience stops short of murder and assault, but extends to trespassing, resisting arrest, and disturbing the peace. They are fond of holding up graphic and hideous posters of mutilated babies who have been salined or suctioned to death. Tiny, mangled, two-dimensional limbs and torsos are thrust into the faces of young women in an effort to dissuade them from entering the clinic. And, by the way, the clergyman's sign reminds, "Jesus heals and forgives."

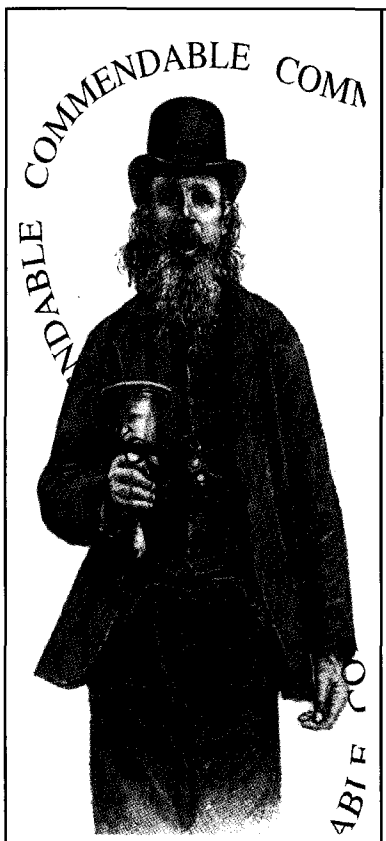
Today's thought police would have us believe that anti-abortion rhetoric is the equivalent of an act of violence against women. But the acrimony and hostility of "pro-choicers" do not absolve the Christian right of committing public acts of indecency. What justifies the display of children, made in the image of God but defiled by man, on the posters and pamphlets of pro-lifers? Is this pornography somehow justifiable because it serves a higher purpose? Does the end of stopping the killing of children justify the means of civil disobedience?

It does not, for the purpose is not higher, nor are the means acceptable, particularly in light of the unbiblical and historically false notions upon which they are based.

When pagans go to slaughter their own children, individual Christians are not commanded to intervene, either by force or peaceably, if "peaceably" means breaking the law. Stopping the hands of a murderer is in the power of the executive branch and is based on the law (which currently permits, and often funds, abortion on demand). Self-defense is also permitted, but that only covers oneself (which includes one's wife and children).

The pro-life movement perpetuates the myth of the "great Christian America" to which we must return. "God is going to judge us if we do not end abortion in America." By the time of this nation's founding, Western civilization was entering its post-Christian era. The Puritans' false identification of their "city on a hill" as the modern-day Israel was quickly secularized by enlightened deists whose Manifest Destiny was not uniquely Christian. Perhaps God is judging us by *allowing* abortion.

"If only we could pass a ban on abortion through Congress," pro-lifers often lament. This emphasis on political action permeates the pro-life movement and carries the same sentiment formerly attached to civil-rights legislation, Prohibition, and gun laws. But an amendment to the Constitution does not compare with an empowered local government



Murray N. Rothbard, *Economic Thought Before Adam Smith* and *Classical Economics: An Austrian Perspective on the History of Economic Thought* (Edward Elgar). The greatest American disciple of Ludwig von Mises illuminates the history of economic freedom.

Donald W. Livingston, *Hume's Philosophy of Common Life* (University of Chicago). Through an examination of the thought of David Hume, Livingston explores the tension between individual autonomy and tradition.

Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (Liberty Classics). A utilitarian's critique of the excesses of John Stuart Mill.

Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism* (University of Chicago). In his last book, Hayek explains why abstract conceptions of the individual, without some grounding in history and tradition, inevitably lead to tyranny.

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and morally just citizens who could refuse to let abortuary employees shop in their stores, dine in their restaurants, buy homes, and license their "clinics" (or live, for that matter, if local governments and laws were established to be Christian).

By majority, America is pro-choice. This fact should drive every Christian who recognizes the evil of murdering children to fight for local rights—or secession. Instead, Christians turn to the same "big government" they claim to loathe (when it disappoints them) and to shocking, immoral images and propaganda, designed not to convert unbelievers or placard natural law, but to invoke the "feel, don't think" mentality of post-Christian pop culture. Gutting a baby doll in public is not a proclamation of the Gospel; it will not convert pagans on their way to murder their children; and it should not be tolerated by Christians, who should heed the prophet Nathan's rebuke to David: "You have given the Lord's enemies cause to blaspheme."

—*Aaron D. Wolf*

THE LENIN MUMMY, by the time *Chronicles* readers see this, may already have been spirited from its Red Square pyramid, and the Communist Party of Russia (CPRF) may have been banned. In mid-July, rumors of such a scenario were circulating among the various pundits, crooks, politicos, cab drivers, and assorted hangers-on who usually pass leaks—sometimes intentional ones—from the massive red-brick walls on the Moscow river. July 17 marked the anniversary of the savage murder of the last Russian czar and his family, and Red stalwarts braced themselves for the worst. No such announcement, however, came from Gorky-9, Boris Yeltsin's dacha, where he spends most of his time nowadays between trips to the Central Clinical Hospital and occasional Kremlin ceremonies. Nevertheless, the CPRF suspects that the Bolshevik pharaoh's remains may have been desecrated: Radical communist Viktor Ilyukhin, for instance, claimed that the holy relic had been replaced with a wax dummy, and Ilyukhin and other true believers are still keeping their guard up as August begins and the official start of the campaign season approaches. Elections to the Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament (in which the CPRF presently has the largest single faction), are set for December.

Yeltsin and his "family"—the entourage that has systematically robbed Russia under the banner of "reform" since 1991—have cause to consider drastic measures. Come July 2000, Boris I's reign will officially terminate: There's the rub. If the CPRF is able to retain its influence in the Duma, the "family" just may wind up in the judicial hot seat next summer, especially if Yeltsin and the Russian "elite," mostly gangsters, shady "businessmen," and amoral media hatchetmen, can't find a suitable leader for the "party of power," one who will ensure "stability," the "continuity of power," and a "continuation of reform." So far, none of the aspirants—who include Moscow mayor and kickback king Yuri Luzhkov; former premier Sergei Stepashin; Stepashin's successor and Yeltsin's designated heir Vladimir Putin (since Yeltsin's blessing is a political kiss of death, many observers see the naming of Putin as a Yeltsin ploy to draw fire away from another "hidden" successor); and "family" favorites Viktor Chernomyrdin and Deputy Premier Nikolai Aksenenko—seem to have won the favor of the crown. Outsider Aleksandr Lebed—governor of the vast Krasnoyarsk region, tough as nails, and an "unpredictable" Cossack to boot—gives elites the willies. Ex-premier Yevgeni Primakov is too honest and would have actually defended Russian national interests in the Balkans, scuttling the $4.5 billion IMF loan Stepashin accepted in late July. Meanwhile, various shenanigans aimed at dividing the communist-nationalist coalition and unifying the "elite" haven't panned out, with the pretenders to the mantle of Yeltsin's chosen successor and their minions fighting among themselves, threatening the "continuity of power" and the future of "reforms."

Thus the Lenin burial scheme: Yeltsin himself told *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in July that Lenin should be buried; Stepashin subsequently saw fit to float the idea while in Washington, cashing in on Yeltsin's betrayal of Yugoslavia; Russian Orthodox Patriarch Aleksei had raised the whole issue (probably at Yeltsin's prompting) back in May. The scheme is a classic Yeltsin provocation and goes something like this: spirit the mummy from its tomb and either bury it in St. Petersburg (as the Bolshevik leader requested) or, better still, cremate Lenin and scatter his ashes to the winds in imitation of the barbaric dismembering and dissolution of the Romanovs in 1918. (Yeltsin has some experience in these matters. As Sverdlovsk (now Yekaterinburg) party boss, he ordered the demolition of the Ipatiev house—the site of the 1918 regicide—back in the 1970's, depriving underground "White guardists" of a monument.) The Communists just may react violently, giving the Yeltsin-backed "anti-extremism" commission the grounds to ban the CPRF, or at least prevent the registration as Duma candidates of any of its members who are involved in "extremism." If the CPRF leaders fail to react, once again showing their inclination to GOP-like self-immolation, they will be discredited once and for all. Yeltsin has yet to spring this trap and may opt for some other, even more outlandish, scenario to ensure "clean and fair" parliamentary elections. It is a long time until December. Stay tuned.

—*Denis Petrov*

OBITER DICTA: Two poets are featured in our pages this month. The first is **Bradley R. Strahan**, who teaches poetry at Georgetown University. Over 500 of his poems have been published in such journals as *America*, *Christian Century*, the *Seattle Review*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Orbis*, and *Poetry Australia*. Mr. Strahan leads the Washington Poets' Workshop and is the publisher of the *Black Buzzard Review*.

Charles Edward Eaton, who lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is our second poet. Mr. Eaton is the author of 14 collections of poetry, four volumes of short stories, and a novel, *A Lady of Pleasure*. He is the recipient of the North Carolina Award for Literature, among other prizes, and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Literature degree by St. Andrews College.

Chronicles is illustrated this month by St. Petersburg native **Anatol Woolf**, who, in addition to freelance work, has designed sets for theaters in Russia and provided illustrations for St. Petersburg Textbook Publishers. Since coming to America in 1987, Mr. Woolf has been a frequent contributing artist to *Chronicles*, as well as to the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Times*, *Policy Review*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Legal Times*, and *Cricket*. Mr. Woolf works with a variety of materials, from watercolors to pencil to acrylic. Further samples of his work are available on his website: *www.netcom.com/~a.woolf/*.

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None More Terrible Than Man

by Thomas Fleming

Anatol Woolf

The past half-millennium that began with the fall of Constantinople and the subsequent discovery of the New World has gone by so many titles that its name might be legion: It has been the age of "progress" and "discovery," a period of "enlightenment," the era of "democracy." However, all these glorious nicknames that stud the pages of history textbooks like so many Homeric epithets are surface indications of a darker truth that lies in the depths, that this has really been the age of false dichotomies, which began in the distinction between the imagined "Dark Ages" and the rediscovery of individual dignity in the 15th century, and it is dying, crushed under the rubble of its shattered historical lies. Progress and Enlightenment, Democracy and Individualism are so many words on a tombstone, and it is time to lay their ghosts.

Philosophers from Montaigne and Descartes to Marx and Mill have spent the past four centuries honing abstractions into weapons to cut the cords that weave men and women into the social fabric: the concept of absolute national sovereignty that sucked away the vitality of communities, families, and the Church; the concept of equality that obliterated all the little differences and polarities that converge into a commonwealth; and the concept of the free autonomous individual that accomplished, from the bottom, the social and political revolution which the sovereign state was enforcing from the top.

By the mid-20th century, no political discussion could be conducted if it was not expressed in the polar terms of the Individual and the State. Libertarians and leftists, who might disagree on virtually everything else, do concur on the terms of the debate and reduce political theory and practice down to the allocation of power between atomized individuals and the molecular state that may or may not express their "general will." These twin concepts, sown by Hobbes and Locke and Rousseau, are the dragon's teeth that have sent poor men into killing each other over theories of national destiny, class conflict, and human rights.

Although discourses on political theory are salted with discussions of the state—its origins, nature, and development—the individual is taken for granted, as if the mere fact that our bodies are separate constitutes a self-evident proof that the individual is universal. It is a strange fact, however, that the Greeks—who are said to have had a word for everything—only slowly were able to conceptualize the individual, and even Aristotle wondered if an individual human being could be regarded as happy if, after he died, his family and community suffered a disaster.

In the earliest and greatest works of our literature—the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—the outlandish treatment of the human personality led so great a scholar as Bruno Snell to conclude that the Greeks of Homer's time could not conceive of the human being as an individual. Homer has no good word corresponding to English words like person or individual, and when his warriors react or reflect, it is usually through some physical (or quasi-physical) organ. When Agamemnon rages against Achilles for his presumption, his *phrenes* (diaphragm?) are swollen black, and various emotions are felt or expressed by activities in the heart or in the *thymus*. When Achilles is making up his mind whether or not to draw his sword and kill Agamemnon for his insults, his decision to meditate a more rational revenge is portrayed as divine intervention—Athena pulls him by the hair and tells him to vent his spleen (the Greeks are not the only people to think organically) in words.

Although it is unlikely that the inventors of our civilization were far more primitive, intellectually, than any known culture, the ancient Greeks, even in the age of Aristotle, never fully arrived at a conception of the human individual that would have pleased a modern philosopher.

Obviously, even Homeric Greeks had names to distinguish their individuality, and there were ways of metaphorically refer-

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ring to the individual as "the head of so-and-so." In the first line of Sophocles' *Antigone*, the heroine calls upon her sister Ismene, saying literally, "Oh common self-sister head of Ismene," which Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones (in his recent Loeb edition) Englishes as "My own sister Ismene, linked to myself." Although the word "head" is used to indicate the person of Ismene, the two sisters are verbally linked to a degree that would be difficult in English, and throughout this great tragedy, Sophocles lays great stress on the common identity of the two sisters with their two brothers and with their entire lineage.

The plot of the play is simple enough. King Oedipus of Thebes, who inadvertently killed his father and married his mother, left behind four children: the daughters, Ismene and Antigone, and the sons, Eteocles and Polynices, who quarreled over power and precedence. Expelled from Thebes, a disgruntled Polynices recruits an army of champions and attacks his native city in a vain attempt to recover his power.

The brothers kill each other in battle, and the new ruler, their maternal uncle Creon, orders that the body of Polynices be left unburied and unmourned on pain of death. Polynices' sister Antigone is caught sprinkling dust on the body. Brought to Creon, she confesses her "crime" and is condemned to be buried alive in a cave. When her fiancé, Creon's son Haemon, attempts to intercede for her, he is rebuffed and goes off to join Antigone in death. The prophet Teiresias, who warns Creon of his folly, is accused of taking bribes; but on second thought, Creon orders the burial of Polynices and rushes off to prevent the death of Antigone only to find his son weeping over the dead girl, who has hanged herself. After attacking his father, Haemon turns the sword upon himself. Creon's wife, hearing the news, kills herself, leaving her husband to reflect on the vicissitudes of human life.

Few ancient masterpieces have been revived and discussed more often than the *Antigone*, and few have been more distorted in the process. The play has been viewed as a contest between religion and the state, women and men, the individual and society. During World War II, Jean Anouih composed a French version in which Antigone obviously represents France in resistance and Creon is the Nazi tyrant. But most such interpretations, while valid up to a point, overlook certain facts of life (both ancient and modern) that are essential to any comprehensive understanding of the play.

The crucial problem of *Antigone* is the burial of Polynices: It is the family's religious duty to bury a dead member, whatever he might have done. An enemy of the city remains a member of the family, and unless the social order is actually threatened, it can never be a good thing for a child to treat a parent with disrespect or inform the authorities of his brother's bad habits. As Antigone tells Creon, "There is no shame in showing regard for those of one's own stock." Creon asks her if doing honor to her traitor-brother is not an insult to Eteocles, who defended his country, and when Antigone tells him that the god of the dead demands it, Creon insists that the good and the bad are not equally deserving.

Antigone, speaking as a believer, explains to her uncle that no one knows what the gods of the dead think is honorable. Creon, thinking as a statesman, insists: "An enemy is never a friend, even when he is dead," which sounds sensible enough, until Antigone goes to the heart of the question, which is the duty of blood: "I was born not to share in hatred but in love"—that is, it is part of the human condition to care for those we are related to.

Creon exemplifies the political leader who understands everything under the sun except the power of love and the meaning of death. In the end, his arrogance costs him his entire family. Antigone's case is also hard. Her brother, admittedly, became an enemy of the people, and he could not have been an easy man to "love." But this young girl's love is not a merely emotional attachment: It is an unseen umbilical cord that ties her to all her family, dead as well as living. Since all the male heirs of Oedipus are dead, it is up to the elder daughter to discharge the family's functions in life and death. Such "heiresses" in Athens were typically married off to uncles or cousins to preserve the lineage and property. (In this sense, it is perfectly natural that she is engaged to Haemon, whatever the two might think of each other.) Although she is a very brave girl—her actions would be heroic even in a man—her defiance of the ruler is not an expression of her individual will but of her commitment to her family. Paradoxically, it is the strength of that commitment that impels her to an act of individual heroism.

The intellectual heart of the play is the so-called "ode on man" celebrating the accomplishments of the human race and warning against human presumption. Playing on the word *deinos* (which means "exciting wonder and terror" but also, when used of people, can mean "good at" doing something) the chorus tells us that there are many wonderful/terrible things on earth, but none is more wonderful/terrible/skillful than man.

Human skills, they sing, have invented devices with which they have tamed the beasts, and in inventing society, man has proved himself to be "all-resourceful": It is only death's kingdom that he approaches without resources. The meaning is clear: Creon, in putting his trust in human skill, fails to realize that human ambition is limited by the gods of the dead. The point is driven home:

> Skillful beyond hope is the contrivance of his art, and he advances sometimes to evil, at other times to good.
> When he applies the laws of the earth and the justice the gods have sworn to uphold he is high in the city; outcast from the city is he with whom the ignoble consorts for the sake of gain [i.e., his individual advancement].

So long as man continues to see himself in the context of his community, he prospers, but if he tries to set himself above the traditional prejudices and superstitious reverence of his people, he will, like Creon, destroy everything.

This play of Sophocles is not "about" individualism; what is striking is not so much what he says about self-will and community as the social and moral attitudes that are taken for granted both in the *Antigone* and in other Attic tragedies.

The conflicts between loyalties—loyalty to kin, loyalty to community, loyalty to the gods—are the constant theme of Greek literature in its "Golden Age." The strain of attachment was a reflection of Greek social life in places where the *polis* was growing at the expense of clans and kindreds. During the same period, Greek religion was subject to great stress from rationalizing philosophers like Pericles' friend, Anaxagoras, who taught that the sun was a hot metallic ball and explained away prodigies on a naturalistic basis. In Homer's day, human motivations were inextricably entwined in the divine, and it was not possible to conceive of man except, in some sense, as a projection or plaything of the gods. By the time of Aeschylus and Sophocles, however, human nature is in the forefront but not to be under-

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stood except in relation to the divine—and woe unto the mortal ruler like Creon, who contemned the power of Hades, or Pentheus (in Euripides' *Bacchae*), who tried to suppress the rites of Dionysus.

The classic moment, best caught in the Parthenon sculptures, is the generation when the divine, the transcendent, and the ideal are still glimpsed, as in an X-ray vision, beneath the surface of human life. Earlier Greek sculptors had conceived of the human body in essentially geometric terms of angles and mathematical proportions. As the demands of realism were felt increasingly in the sixth century, the formulas had to be constantly revised; however, the natural human form was never the goal, but a human form in which both mathematical perfection and our ordinary intuition of human beauty were realized. The moment of balance comes in the mid-fifth century, when Greek sculptors accomplished the most realistic sculpture the world had seen without backing down a step on their mathematical idealism.

That balance between the divine and human, between flesh and pure number, is the essence of classicism, and once it is lost, religion retreats into the realms of fables and philosophy, and artists must be content with flesh alone. The tension in the Greek mind was only restored when they recovered the sense of the divine by learning to accept the man who is God.

And so it went for a thousand years and more, when the Western mind recovered its virility, the primitive vigor of archaic Greece, in that richly creative millennium we used to call the Dark Ages. Another set of classic moments were reached in the Renaissance, as one by one the cities and peoples of Europe rediscovered the person without, at least at first, losing their faith in the divine.

But this time around, the descent into the "all-too-human" was more precipitous. Instead of sinking into the glorious mediocrity of Hellenistic civilization which lasted, after all, for a thousand years, we slid violently into the abyss. While philosophers and political leaders dreamed of being Napoleonic heroes and Nietzschean strongmen, in reality they were only becoming individualists, producers and consumers whose highest conception of community was mutual exploitation, for whom love was sex without children. Their true philosopher was neither Mill nor Nietzsche, but the Marquis de Sade, a man born 200 years before his time. In the name of individual liberty, Sade opposed capital punishment but championed abortion and women's rights. (In more playful moments, he also defended the value of theft, rape, infanticide, and murder.)

If the "divine Marquis" could walk up and down upon the earth today, he would give his blessing to the films and television programs that encourage us to think of children not as extensions of a family but as individual objects for sexual exploitation, and to a global political-economic system that, in the name of "individual human rights," has assumed more power over the world than Creon ever dreamed of exercising in tiny Thebes and that, like him, is bent on eradicating "the justice the gods have sworn to uphold." Indeed the "gods" themselves are made the enemy of the state, as if America were the Thebes of Pentheus and Creon.

Sade's only disappointment would come from the realization that there was so little left for him to do. He might want to run for some high political office in the United States, but he would find those positions were already being filled admirably by his disciples.

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DICTATIONS

Party of One

Herbert Hoover once praised the "American system of rugged individualism." (This was the same Hoover who gave Americans a trial run of New Deal socialism.) The ideology of individualism is a classic piece of 19th-century claptrap. Once upon a time, people could speak of freedom and liberty without erecting an "ism" or "ology," but as real liberty was destroyed, it was not replaced with a frank admission of servility but with the twin abstractions of "collectivism" and "individualism," which turned out in practice to mean virtually the same thing: the destruction of the social conditions that enable some people to be free.

The word "individual" was suspect almost from the start. Beginning as a term of medieval philosophy, it was used to signify that which could not be divided—an atom, in other words. From there, it came to mean a single example of a species of things, and from there it was downhill to the word's current sacred status, as in "freedom of the individual" and "individual rights."

Here in Middle America, you can still hear middle-class college graduates use "individual" as a synonym for "man" or "person." Mencken blamed the newspapers of the Gilded Age, citing Dean Alford's denunciation of newspaper English: "You never read of a man, or a woman, or a child. A man is an individual, or a person, or a party; a woman is a female or, if unmarried, a young person; a child is a juvenile, and children en masse are expressed by that most odious term, the rising generation."

To say "individual" instead of "man" is a harmless—if irritating—mistake. More insidious is the persistent confusion of "individual" with "person." While a person, in the traditional sense, is a human being—body and soul—considered in relation to his fellows and to his Maker, the individual is by definition an atom in the void, considered abstractly for itself. The individual is, therefore a cipher, or rather an imaginary number.

The very concept, when introduced into political discourse, annihilates all human distinctions between old and young, man and woman, wise and foolish, good and bad. To that extent, an individual cannot possibly have liberty, either in a political or moral sense. Real liberty is always the extension of some distinctive quality—a strong right arm, personal courage, the British rule of law. The individual's only "freedom" is what the state is willing to grant to all without distinction, and a strong man, possessed of both courage and wisdom, will in the end have no more liberty than a newborn baby. That is, he will have none at all.

—*Humpty Dumpty*

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The Making of an Individualist

by Bill Kauffman

Anatol Woolf

"To be merely queer is no achievement, but to be brilliantly individualistic is a fine art which Geneva brought to perfection," wrote Warren Hunting Smith, who died last November at the age of 93.

Mr. Smith lived something of a double life. He was an editor of the Yale Edition of the Horace Walpole correspondence, but he was also the resident man of letters in his hometown of Geneva, New York.

The Smith family had made its fortune in the nursery business, which is to say in the cultivation of trees and shrubs, not in the provision of stranger-supervised daycare for the squalling spawn of yuppies, the latter being the nursery business that made failed Republican presidential candidate Lamar Alexander a rich man.

The family was not quite salt of the earth. Smith's uncle, William, a misogynistic bachelor who founded the women's college that bears his name, was a spiritualist who bequeathed to nephew Warren a notebook containing letters "beginning 'Dear Mr. Smith' and signed by such names as Socrates, Julius Caesar, and 'your loving aunt, Sally Coleman.'"

Nonetheless, Warren grew up with ground beneath his feet and the knowledge that Geneva was his. At the age of 25, he published a history of his small city, conceding, "A book of this sort should preferably be written by some mellow old gentleman, full of those memories which younger people can acquire only with painful research. Unfortunately, no such old gentleman has shown any literary interest in Geneva, so I have ventured to usurp the vacant place."

Bill Kauffman is the author, most recently, of With Good Intentions? Reflections on the Myth of Progress in America *(Praeger).*

The book, which he titled *An Elegant but Salubrious Village*, is an outrageous exercise in snobbery, though in the good cause of his hometown. He writes:

> The very name 'Geneva, New York' is a sort of protective coloring, suggesting provincialism of the worst sort. We feel, when we hear it, as we do when we hear of someone named George Washington Schwartz or Michelangelo Snooks; it is as much a surprise to find real charm in this town with the pretentious foreign name as it would be to discover that Mr. Schwartz is really descended from the Washington family, or that Mr. Snooks is actually one of the Buonarroti.

Whether he wrote of English travelers (*Originals Abroad*) or Sunday painters (*Gentle Enthusiasts in Art*), Mr. Smith's subject was always individuality. His only novel, the delightful *The Misses Elliot of Geneva* (1940), sketched two ancient Episcopalian sisters with "one hundred and sixty-five years of celibacy" between them. They hated "foreigners, Democrats, High Churchmen, and companies that don't pay dividends," and we understand, by novel's end, that sisters Primrose and Candida are the last magnificent specimens of a dying breed.

Death spared the Misses Elliot the pain of viewing the grotesque consequences of World War II and the ensuing Permanent War. Their Geneva was decimated when 45,000 transients bunked at the nearby Sampson naval training center. The stately old porticoed homes were remodeled into apartments; wooden barracks were thrown up to catch the "human avalanche." Local historian Arch Merrill wrote, "a blue tide surged into Geneva every night. The city virtually became a roaring Navy camp and the blare of the juke boxes in the 20

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night spots all but drowned out the thunder of the organ of Trinity Church and the voices of the traditional past."

The city prospered, became meretricious. Rouged and slinky, she had a fat purse for several years: Sampson made Geneva a Goliath. But Uncle Sam tired of this particular whore, and in 1956 he moved on. Geneva never quite recovered, though today Primrose and Candida's house is only an arthritic jog from Wal-Mart.

The Misses Elliot of Geneva was praised by Stephen Vincent Benét, who saw in the haughty old maids "a certain kind of individualistic American small-city society, independent, crotchety, brisk and always speaking its mind." The sisters, wrote Mr. Smith, "felt that the United States of America was, in a spiritual sense, almost their own property, just as they felt that Geneva almost belonged to them." This is the proprietary patriotism that one finds in Edmund Wilson and Gore Vidal, for instance, or in those "love-cracked" New England spinsters whose campaigns in the 1950's to save the tall oak tree from the highway-wideners or to preserve the home of their town's third-rate poet earned condescending, faintly sneering, notice from *Life* magazine. (When was the last time an American high school was named for a poet? Can you imagine the citizens of Centerville dedicating Adrienne Rich High?)

Mr. Smith was what once was known as a confirmed bachelor. He did not use a computer. He did not watch *Friends*; he had friends. Until the end, he painted every Sunday—the hills and grapy vales of his Finger Lakes. (Shortly before his death, he sent me a photograph of himself, bespectacled. In his old-man's scratch, he scrawled, "I don't need glasses, except when out sketching landscapes.")

I met Warren Hunting Smith when he was 86 years old: He was the only person I'd ever known whose favorite novelist was Louis Auchincloss. In the abstract, I was an anti-Smith, for I am a leveller who has always regarded the old families as effete and useless, producing their withered lines of druggie sons and wan daughters, breeding like incestuous dogs and bragging about their thieving ancestors on the wedding page of the *New York Times*. ("When people put a lot on what their folks used to do, it always means they haven't got gimp enough left to do anything themselves," as Grandma Savage says in Booth Tarkington's *The Midlander*.)

My grandfather Baker was a handyman on the estate of the Woodwards, self-styled aristocrats of our county—old man Woodward, a patent-medicine salesman, paid a penniless local inventor $450 for the formula to what became Jell-O. The paternalistic Woodwards paid for my mother's birth, for which I am grateful, but I never could figure out how one could grow snooty over a fortune based on those inedible jigglers for sale in hospital cafeterias. Then again, I'm told that the most insufferably pompous member of the House of Representatives is Wisconsin Rep. James Sensenbrenner, heir to the Kotex fortune. The ways of superciliousness are mysterious.

My Sicilian great-uncle toiled for the Wadsworths, land barons of Western New York, a.k.a. the ones who stole all this land from the Indians. Old man Wadsworth once fired a hired hand for having the audacity to purchase a Model-T; when his niece reproved him, he called her "a goddamn Bolshevik." The purpose of this dancing on the limbs of the family tree is to say that my sympathies are and always have been with the black scullion hidden in the kitchen and spitting in the soup.

Yet I have learned that the old families are essential to Benét's "individualistic American small-city society." Given that Money calls the shots in this country, their place has been taken not by honest workmen or staunch merchants but by absentee-owned megastores whose names are never found on the list of sponsors of the historical society, the hospital guild, the friends of the library, the concert band, the minor-league baseball team, or the community groups that give a place its accent. In most such cities today, all that remains of the old industrialists are . . . their remains.

Individualistic Warren Hunting Smiths are produced by long years of residence in one place. They are not minted in colleges, for as the Kansan Wes Jackson writes, schools offer "only one major: upward mobility." Or outward mobility. Leave-taking. (Of the school his uncle endowed, Warren Hunting Smith said, "The people of the college have no interest in civic affairs.")

The departure of Smiths may set in motion a series of events that ends in collapse, as ruderal Wal-Marts sprout like poison mushrooms in the ruins. In my own small city, Batavia, New York, the sons and daughters of what we might call the Booth Tarkington class left, *en masse*, after World War II, often taking up residence in soulless suburbs far from the city whose stores and factories bore their family names. So that political power would not devolve to the workers in those factories, the Republican middle-class abolished the mayoralty and foisted upon us a city-manager system, which for 40 years has imported credentialed transients who oversaw a Dresden-like urban renewal program that devastated the city and dispirited the citizens. But at least we were saved from a Polack machinist or Dago baker as mayor.

Today, when the middle-class deserters who abandoned ship return for a look-see, stooped and graying, their own children and grandchildren further scattered, without any mooring sturdier than a telephone cord, they walk our barren Main Street and mutter about how our shabby town has lost all its *character* (I thought adversity built character) and how we have gone to hell. Yes, and whose fault is that, Mr. Assistant Vice President? I hope you like your $400,000 house in Littleton.

Warren Hunting Smith understood that his old maids were individualistic instead of merely queer because they had not the curse of wealth. Genteel poverty kept the sisters at home, "rooted to their native soil when other people are losing their local flavor abroad." It is all very easy for the rootless to strike their poses of "individualism" in distant cities, where the mass of self-proclaimed individualists exhibit all the diversity of a convention of performance artists. Only an anonymous person has to "make a name for himself," but that name is written in disappearing ink.

As a picture needs background, so does a person, at least if she wishes to be something beyond merely queer. For instance, the lector in a small Catholic church nearby is a lesbian so butch she makes Janet Reno look like Donna Reed. Yet because she is native, and the people in the congregation have seen her grow up, have lived with her through funerals and snowstorms and baseball games, she is accepted as a full and irreplaceable part of the community. Were she an outsider, she and her girlfriend would draw disapproving stares. Tough. Immobility should have its privileges, too.

In *An Elegant But Salubrious Village*, Mr. Smith concluded, "Even the obscurest Genevans are somehow distinguished, and know how to live like individuals and not like a flock of sheep." Do we? c

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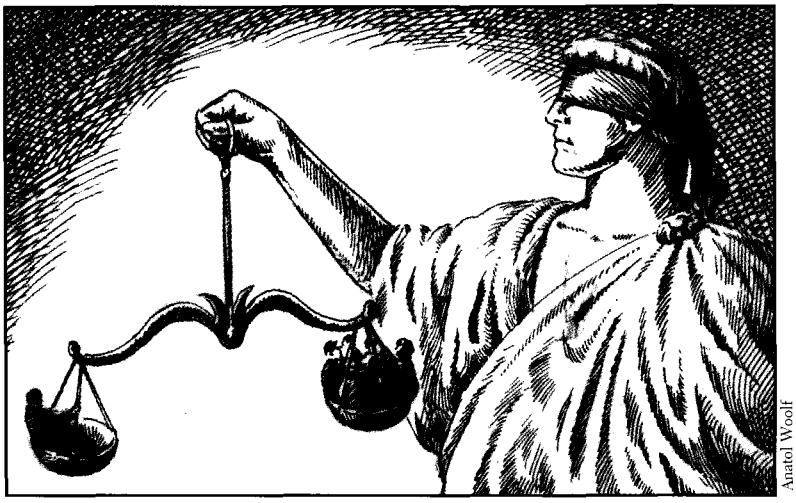
Every Neighbor a Litigant

The Individual Versus the Community

by Stephen B. Presser



Anatol Woolf

Goethe taught us that true happiness comes from being engaged with others in productive projects, and we have known since Plato and Aristotle that man is a social animal, but we would be hard put to reach these conclusions if our only guide were the current state of American law. Far too often the American legal system, at least at the federal level, is obsessed with the purported rights of individuals and gives short shrift to collective enterprise.

Until the New Deal, the U.S. Supreme Court understood that the bedrock of constitutional law was the system of property and contract law that the Framers thought their new Constitution would secure. Property and contract are classic means by which the legal system binds us together and allows individuals to form meaningful relationships. In the period between our break with Great Britain in 1776 and the drafting of the federal Constitution in 1787, property and contract were at risk, as irresponsible state legislatures passed moratoriums on the collection of contractual debts and repeatedly issued increasingly worthless paper money as legal tender. By placing matters concerning currency in the new national government and by forbidding the state legislatures from interfering with contracts, the Framers believed that the country could achieve prosperity through the creation of a climate in which property, contracts, commerce, and relationships would thrive. We were to be a great commercial republic, and, in spite of everything, so we still are.

The Framers understood that the keeping of promises and the carrying out of our just obligations to each other were the means to build up virtue in the citizenry and help guarantee the kind of disinterested public decision-making which is essential to a stable republic. Cooperation and productivity were vital, and individuals were valued to the extent that they contributed to the community. The Framers were not strangers to the dark parts of the human heart and soul, however, and the constitutional scheme was to create a structure whereby selfish special interests in society and government were played off against each other, so that the true national interest—virtue, stability, prosperity, cooperative endeavor—could be achieved. The Framers understood that unchecked democracy leads to anarchy and license, so the republican scheme they erected had anti-democratic elements, including an upper house, a President not subject to direct popular election, judicial review, and a Bill of Rights.

The Framers were convinced that a virtuous citizenry would be required to preserve the governmental structure, and they would probably be shocked to see how the edifice they erected has been torn down, piece by piece. Arguments masked as promoting democracy or benefiting allegedly disadvantaged individuals or groups have undermined the foundation of American community and put at risk property, contract, and commerce.

The 16th Amendment, allowing direct taxation on income

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by the federal government, rendered property insecure and transferred the wealth of one class of society involuntarily to another, while creating a vast national bureaucracy which seeks to sustain itself by maintaining the mechanism of wealth transfer and a high level of taxation. The 17th Amendment, by mandating the direct election of senators, removed an essential check on democracy and led to an upper house moved more by opinion polls than constitutional obligations, as we saw most vividly in the recent travesty of the Senate trial on President Clinton's impeachment charges. The informal practice by which the Electoral College has become dominated by the national parties has led to a circumvention of the indirect scheme for presidential election, as presidential candidates are now picked through an increasingly demagogic state primary election process instead of through the reasoned deliberation of specially chosen, nonpartisan electors.

Rather than picking public officials as a result of their reputation for wisdom and virtue, as the Framers hoped, we pick them on the basis of their telegenic qualities, their appeal to our special interests, or the ingenuity of their campaigns, which pander to our baser instincts. This is not a new problem, of course: The formation of national factions and a press capable of supporting such campaigns have been with us since the turn of the 18th century. But it is only in recent years that the legal and constitutional supports which protected us from ourselves and our officials have very nearly collapsed under the combined weight of a misguided Supreme Court, an overly active legislature, and a venal executive.

The Supreme Court's abandonment of constitutional safeguards is a well-known story, but one still worth reviewing for the light it casts on the dismantling of the Framers' design in the other branches. The story begins with the replacement of the "Nine Old Men" on the pre-New Deal Supreme Court with lawyers and politicians active in the New Deal and in post-New Deal Democratic politics. Before the New Deal, the Court's vision of constitutional and private law was a conservative one, and it was not unusual, even, for members of the Supreme Court to declare that ours was a Christian country, to permit prayer in the public schools, and to allow the enforcement, by law, of a morality of cooperation and deference. The theoretical rights of the individual were much less important than the security of the community. The Bill of Rights was used to restrain the federal government, as it was intended to do, and state and local governments enjoyed the freedom to function, in Justice Brandeis's famous phrase, as "social laboratories" working out divergent recipes for community and social solidarity.

Perhaps carried away by the grander schemes of the national government under the New Deal, and appalled by what they perceived to be the failure of state and local governments to improve the lot of black Americans, the justices of the Supreme Court, from the 1930's on, broadened the powers of the federal government by ignoring prior constitutional restraints and allowing individuals greater freedom to assert newly created constitutional rights. The process began before the Warren Court, but with the ascendance of Earl Warren it accelerated; state and local governments were soon told by the Supreme Court how to conduct their schools, their police procedures, and even the composition and work of their legislatures.

The Bill of Rights, through the dubious "incorporation" doctrine, was read into the 14th Amendment and turned against the state and local governments it was supposed to have aided. The democratic, secular, and highly individualistic vision of the Warren Court survived the Burger and Rehnquist courts, reaching its apotheosis in the "mystery passage" of *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*. In that notorious case, a plurality of the Court, refusing to recognize that it had no legitimate business in prohibiting the states from solving the difficult problem of abortion on their own, reaffirmed that the right to seek an abortion was embedded in the Constitution because "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."

This purported "right" seems to endorse individualism only for its own sake, and its expression by the Court indicates it has forgotten the wisdom of Goethe and the Greeks, that meaning in life arises only from our relationship with others. It is no surprise, then, that the Court has too often allowed the supports for the building of stable communities at the local and state level to erode, and, unfortunately, the record of the federal legislature has not been much better.

Congress has not been without its recent successes, such as the defeat of the Clinton health-care initiative and the enactment of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, a badly needed law which made it more difficult to file frivolous lawsuits against corporations and their officers and directors (and the only substantive measure Congress has managed to pass over President Clinton's veto). But many other congressional measures have driven wedges between American citizens, between employers and employees, and between corporations and their constituencies. Many of the recent civil rights and voting laws have led as much to expensive litigation, arbitrary administrative enforcement, and racially and ethnically divisive politics as they have to more participation in the political process or the building of stable communities. When the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission believes it is wise to compel Hooters Restaurant to hire males as waiters in place of the eponymically endowed Hooters girls, things have gone too far.

> Much of the hope of reviving American ideals of cooperation and virtue may lie in the law of corporations and of business enterprise.

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a measure passed and, surprisingly, not vetoed during the Bush administration, is typical of nanny-state legislation, which all but obliterates the discretion traditionally permitted by the law of contract. The ADA requires businesses involved in interstate commerce not to discriminate in hiring those with disabilities who, with "reasonable" accommodation by the employer, can do the jobs for which they have applied. Such "reasonable" accommodation can include forced flexible work schedules, additional construction or equipment, and many other measures

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which can require considerable expense and can seem anything but "reasonable" to an employer sued by a disgruntled or rejected employee.

When the ADA was passed, it was conceded that it might give causes of action to more than 40 million Americans; as this goes to press, the Supreme Court is trying to decide whether the wearing of eyeglasses might constitute a "disability" under the Act and whether, even if other federal law would bar a disabled employee from a job, the ADA trumps such legislation. There have been holdings suggesting that virtually all mental diseases or defects might qualify as disabilities, and we will know in a few months whether the Act is to be construed so broadly that more Americans can be considered "disabled" than are "able." Fortunately, some congressional efforts to regulate (the content of the Internet in particular) have foundered, but, to too great an extent, Congress seems still to be following the maxim, "If it moves, regulate it; if it doesn't move, kick it; and then, when it moves, regulate it."

Whole classes of victims have also been created by federal environmental legislation, which has promoted the multiplication of claims against alleged polluters or their affiliated corporations. At times, the protection offered by the corporate form itself has all but disappeared in the rush by some federal courts to do away with the shareholder protections of state corporate law in the service of some purported federal legislative goal. In this particular matter, the Supreme Court has rendered some helpful guidance, recently reaffirming that, absent express congressional directives, the traditional protections of state corporate law should be left undisturbed. At this time, however, it is unclear whether the lower federal courts will heed the directives of the Supreme Court.

Oddly enough, much of the hope of reviving American ideals of cooperation and virtue may lie in the law of corporations and of business enterprise. The law of corporations—a body of doctrines, principally of state law, little understood by laymen—is one of the great American vehicles for the preservation of the law of property and contract. Individual or corporate shareholders join together not only for investment purposes, but—especially in the case of small, closely held corporations—to create meaningful employment possibilities and to improve the economy and society.

State law has been particularly serendipitous in this regard, not only in the formation and maintenance of corporations but also in the invention of the newest business vehicle, the limited liability company, which combines the limited liability and centralized management of the corporation with the tax advantages of the partnership or sole proprietorship. Federal taxation of corporations—or "double taxation," as it is properly called, since the corporation is taxed and then dividends distributed to shareholders are taxed a second time—has often driven corporate policy in strange directions, significantly distorting both tax law and corporate enterprise. Academic study of the corporation has focused almost exclusively on how it can be made to comply with the plethora of new federal regulations or serve favored interest groups rather than how it might better contribute to the promotion of community and productive enterprise. But there are signs that this is beginning to change.

Americans have always valued individualism, but lately the federal courts, the federal legislature, the federal administrative agencies, and the federal executive appear to have forgotten that we valued American individualism because it led to the performance of individual acts of genius which would contribute to the overall welfare of the community. The pressures for conformity in American business and American life, particularly where that conformity betrays our rich heritage of religion, morals, and private enterprise, need to be resisted, but individuality of the kind suggested in the Casey "mystery passage" is as dangerous and vacuous as unthinking conformity. It is doubtful whether the builders of local communities and grassroots productive enterprises can look to any branch of the federal government for much help.

It is alarming, then, that most Americans seem to have accepted, unquestioningly, the idea that the federal government is the source of salvation. Federal programs, benefits, civil servants, and politicians seem to be the only providers of resources or direction in American society. But federal court decisions, legislation, and administrative practice have brought us to a place where we seem to be a nation of potential victims and litigants, with our fabric of community alarmingly frayed.

We seem a nation of isolated individuals, united only in our relationship to a federal government that frequently appears as lost as we are. If there is a remedy for our condition, it lies in the nourishing of local politics and intermediate associations between citizens and the federal government. At the very least, this ought to mean paying more attention to community organizations, state and local governmental bodies, and local schools and churches. We ought to be doing more to encourage divergent approaches through voucher programs, which would allow individuals to build communities by choosing particular religious, ethnic, or regional approaches to education. We might consider extending the voucher idea to encourage participation in education and childcare by local businesses, both as a means of providing for their employees and of providing services to help communities in their work of revival and renewal.

We ought to rethink the nature of American government, and how we might rebuild our shattered structure of virtue-enhancing institutions. The Internet offers a variety of different approaches to communication which might cultivate communities of productive endeavor of a kind that we can barely conceive now. The last few months have seen the apparent creation of billions of dollars of additional wealth because of the stock-market boom, and if this is sustained, there should be additional resources for venture-capital formation and for new companies and corporations which can contribute to community solidarity and individual creativity.

Some sensible constitutional theorists have concluded that we need a new Constitutional Convention to return us to the Framers' wise design, but perhaps the lesson of the last few years is that we would do better to worry less about the federal government (which ought to be allowed to diminish a bit through benign neglect) and more about strengthening state and local communities and businesses. We certainly should spend less time trying to redistribute resources through litigation or legislation and more trying to lay the foundation for a renewal of local enterprise. Following the failure of the planned socialist economies in Eastern Europe in the late 80's and early 90's, critical legal studies and feminism eventually concluded that bold revolutionary strokes were impossible and that the way to change the world was little by little, as enlightened individuals sought to build better communities. This was Goethe's insight too, and here the right might productively learn from the left.

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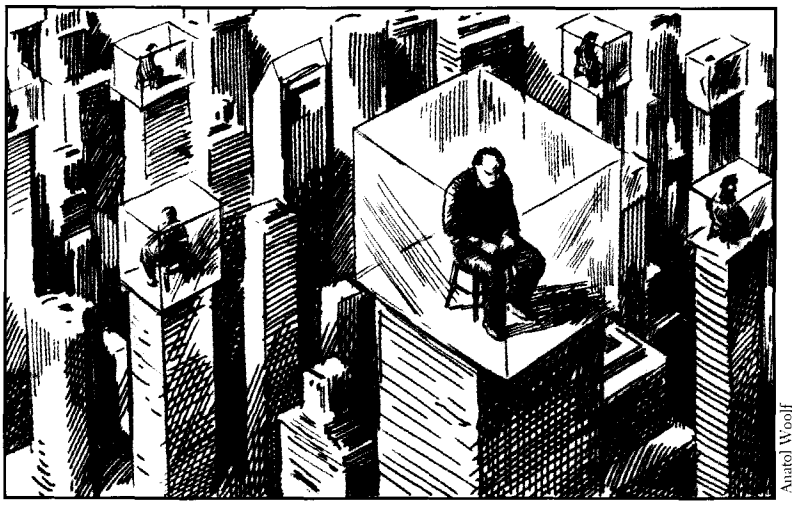
The Strange Career of Individualism

Choice Is It!

by Donald W. Livingston



Anatol Woolf

What is individualism? John Stuart Mill answered this question with a theory of rights. Mill looked for a "simple" theoretical principle that could distinguish the liberty of the individual from that of the state. Not only is there no such principle, but we miss the full character of individualism if we try to grasp it in terms of a philosophical theory of individual rights. What we value as individuality is not a theory but an historic practice. Like all practices, it was a long time arriving, and its character has been quite different in different periods. The ethic of this practice flows from a desire to live a life determined as much as possible by one's own choices. Every civilization has produced remarkable individuals who were self-determining, but only the West developed an ethic demanding self-determination for all human beings. In its pure form, it became the modern doctrine of moral autonomy: One is bound only by the laws he imposes upon himself.

Although the ethic is not necessarily Christian, it is perhaps not an accident that it developed in Christian culture. One way to hold society together is through kinship, tradition, and extensive ritual. Jewish society followed this path. The gospel, however, provided Christians with a different one. Attention shifted away from blood, custom, and ritual to the working of God's grace in the individual soul, whatever its historical origin might be.

But the modern ethic of autonomy did not appear until the 17th century. Nothing resembling the philosophical theory of inalienable natural rights of individuals appears before the late Middle Ages; nor is a counterpart to be found in the ancient languages of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. If there are natural rights of individuals, self-evidently known to all rational beings, it is strange that the language needed to formulate them did not surface until modern times. Natural rights are in fact merely abstractions and idealizations from a particular way of life that prizes choice-making. Those who first enjoyed individuality did not invoke the language of natural rights because no such language had yet been invented. They boldly asserted their interests, and these later came to be transformed into legal rights, as, for example, in Magna Carta. Rights are the public and legal recognition of interests.

As the ethic of individualism gradually spread from men of noble class to men of middle class and, in time, to men of lower class and to women, it seemed to many that the main part of happiness was choice-making itself, and that, consequently, an entirely new conception of human nature, rationality, morality, and politics was needed. The chief obstacle to making autonomy the whole of the moral life was the Aristotelian-Christian tradition, which taught that *what* is chosen is more important than that the choice is one's own. In this tradition, the first question of reason, morality, and politics is, What is the highest good for man and what institutions are needed to educate the passions to desire that good? By the 17th century, Thomas Hobbes had inverted this understanding of moral and political life. There is no highest good that men pursue. There are only egoistically driven individuals, each disposed to pursue his own power and glory without limit unless acted upon by an outside force. Government is to be that force and to establish conditions in which individuals can pursue their own ends, whatever those might be, with a minimum of collision.

Although a number of refinements would be made, the Hobbesian state became the model for the modern state. But there was a catch. In order to secure the individual's autonomy,

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government had to be endowed with indivisible, infallible, and irresistible sovereignty. Only if government had this power would it be able to crush those independent social authorities that pose a threat to the individual's autonomy. The individual would have to obey, without question, the law of the sovereign (whether a monarch or democracy), but both the individual and the sovereign knew that complete freedom would obtain in that domain in which the law was silent, and that the point of law is to increase the scope of this domain as much as possible.

The modern state theorized by Hobbes, if consistently pursued, subverts the public authority of tradition, and with it those practices of virtue that had placed restraints on the egoistic soul. New egoistic moralities emerged to provide justification for the ethic of individualism. Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Mandeville, and many others taught that man is motivated by self-interest and that social order is merely an artifice made out of contracts between enlightened egoists. Butler, Hutcheson, and Hume (who called it "the selfish system") vigorously opposed this theory and tried to find some place for virtue in the emerging modern state. But they did not become central figures in the canon of modern moral philosophy; Kant and Mill did. Both sought to restrain the egoism of individualism while rejecting traditional authority. For Mill, morality is nothing more than what produces the greatest amount of pleasure for the greatest number. Each choice is treated as equal. For Kant, any choice is moral as long as the principle under which it falls can be universalized as a law binding all rational agents. Having abandoned a metaphysical conception of the human good as the ground of ethics, Kant and Mill have nothing substantial to say about the content of what is chosen. In their respective theories, morality is reduced to alternative and incompatible ways of showing respect for choice-making in general.

The attack on tradition found in the Hobbesian modern state and in the new moralities of autonomy was reinforced by the revival of philosophy in the 16th century. This mode of thought, invented by the Greeks, is the most radical form of autonomy. The philosopher makes claims about the whole of reality and certifies these by nothing other than his own thinking. Philosophy cannot defer to traditional authority without ceasing to be what it is. If a tradition is accepted, it is not by virtue of its own authority, whether human or divine, but because it conforms to the philosopher's own self-imposed criteria of what is acceptable. The radical autonomy of philosophy posed little threat to the traditions of ancient Greek and Roman society because the philosopher was constrained by the pagan civil magistrate, as Socrates and Aristotle well knew. Likewise, biblical tradition had kept the radical autonomy of philosophy in check during the long period of Christendom by declaring reason to be "faith seeking understanding."

But by the time of Descartes, the disposition to individualism had found a strong ally in the revival of pagan Greek philosophy. Descartes is known as "the father of modern philosophy" because he established, as a principle of rationality itself, that all tradition is to be presumed false unless it can be shown to be otherwise by a mode of thought not subject to the authority of tradition. Descartes was careful to insist that this conception of rationality should be applied only to metaphysics, physics, and mathematics; it had no place in morals, politics, or religion. But this was only a paper barrier. Within a century, the radical autonomy of philosophy would be grafted onto the ethics of individuality. In the past, the individual had criticized this or that part of tradition, but he had assumed the background of tradition against which to display his individuality. Now, as a philosopher, he could invoke the name of reason to emancipate himself, not just from this or that tradition, but from tradition as such.

Until Descartes, philosophical autonomy had been the province of elites. Now, for the first time in history, it would inform a mass consciousness. The wars of the 16th and 17th centuries were between theological sects. The great struggles of the 20th century would be between secular philosophical sects: liberalism, socialism, Marxism, fascism, conservatism, feminism, modernism, postmodernism, etc. By the middle of the 18th century, Hume could complain that political discourse could not be conducted without a legitimating philosophical theory that would more often than not distort and corrupt whatever it touched. By the end of the century, Thomas Paine, in *Common Sense*, would be peddling Hobbesianism for the masses. And of religion, he would say in *The Age of Reason*, "my own mind is my church"—a maxim that could be written today over the doors of schools of liberal Christian theology. Nearly a century after Paine, Emerson, having emancipated himself from the remaining fragments of his Protestant inheritance, would market for the masses the doctrine that choice-making as such is the absolute: "On my saying, 'What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within?' my friend suggested—'But these impulses may be from below, not from above.' I replied, 'They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil.' No law can be sacred to me but that of my own nature." Nietzsche, understandably, had a great respect for Emerson.

By the late 19th century, the individual had come a long way. From the first spirited actions of late medieval Christian freemen, he had invented an entirely new form of political association—the modern state—to provide a protected space for the pursuit of individual autonomy. He had devised a number of entirely new moralities that legitimated choice-making as nearly the whole of the moral life. And he had even redefined reason itself in such a way as to eliminate from rational discourse the ideas of human nature, the human good, and tradition. Human nature, as understood by the individual, would be nothing but the choices men make. Or, as Sartre would put it, "man is condemned to freedom"—to a life of criterion-less choice. Fragments of tradition would survive, and, in moments of weakness, the individual would warm himself at their fire, but being now endowed with a philosophical consciousness, he could not, in good conscience, long remain.

As the 20th century opened, things looked good for the individual. All the major regimes in Europe were either liberal ones governing in the name of the individual or were well on their way to becoming such. This was true even of czarist Russia. Then World War I tore apart the social fabric of Europe. This was the most important war of the 20th century and the least understood; World War II and the Cold War were merely its fallout. Had the individual read the fine print in the Faustian contract he had made with the modern state, the new moralities of autonomy, and antinomic philosophic reason, he might have seen disaster coming.

As late as the 18th century, Europe was composed of hundreds of independent political units and social authorities. These were, over time, crushed into larger and larger consolidated modern states. The individual had approved of this because it seemed to open up for him a larger sphere for the en-

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joyment of autonomy—and only at the expense of tradition, provinciality, localism, and prejudice. He failed to notice that this process of destruction and consolidation concentrated unprecedented power in the state—power that could be put to uses quite other than that of being an umpire in the game of conflicting autonomies. The rich tapestry of independent social and political authorities had limited the power of the monarch. He could not order universal conscription, nor could he impose an income tax.

But modern states, ruling in the name of the individual, could do both. And with a glut of revenue and men, their wars would be awesome barbarisms. There would be more casualties in World War I (over eight million battle deaths and six million mutilated) than in the two preceding centuries of war in Europe. World War II would mingle civilians and combatants, leaving over 50 million dead. But war was not even the half of it. Nearly four times as many have been killed by their own governments' pursuit of ideological goals as have been killed in all of the wars fought around the globe in the 20th century. And most of this murder has been carried out in the name of the individual's autonomy.

This is a hard saying, but true. The ideologies of Marxism and liberalism have the same goal: maximizing the autonomy of the individual. And both have the same enemies: independent social authorities and religious tradition. The difference is that liberals are willing to accept a certain amount of class inequality for the sake of the market, whereas Marxists insist that autonomy is not available to all unless classes are eliminated. As liberals destroyed smaller polities and traditional authorities, Marxists raised the ante by also destroying classes. And Marx did the liberals one better by arguing that, if classes were eliminated, the state itself would wither away—though he acknowledged that a brief Hobbesian transition period ("the dictatorship of the proletariat") would be necessary. In the bidding over the individual's autonomy, many thought that Marxists offered the better deal. But let us look at what happened to Russia.

Under the czars of the late 19th century, Russia was a flourishing society. By 1907, it was the world's fourth-largest industrial power. In good years, it accounted for 40 percent of world wheat exports; the literacy rate of its military conscripts was 68 percent; and it had scored achievements in the arts and sciences equal to any European country. In the 80 years prior to the 1905 Revolution, the czars executed an average of 17 people a year. By contrast, according to R. J. Rummel, the total number killed by the Soviet regime is around 62 million. The czar's security forces in 1895 amounted to only 161 agents supported by less than 10,000 police. By contrast, in 1921 the Soviet Cheka employed 240,400 agents supported by the Red Army, NKVD, and militiamen. After Lenin, Russia would become an importer of grain, and its once flourishing culture would be dominated by "political correctness."

Can there be any doubt that the individual was better off under the czar, whose power was hedged in by the Church, nobility, provincial authorities, and other traditions? But this is not how the individual has been taught to see things. He has been told, and has come to believe, that the communist revolution was an inevitable reaction to the impossibly oppressive and reactionary regime of the czars. He thinks that the oppression of the Soviet regime—which he does not like to talk about for very long—was the continuation of a Russian authoritarian tradition. He cannot see that the Soviet state was an Enlightenment European regime ruling in the name of the individual's autonomy. He does not understand that the first totalitarian regime was that of the French Revolution, legitimated by the ideology of the rights of man; and that the Soviet terror was the French Terror writ large.

In addition to the threat of mass destruction, the individual would suffer from *anomie*. To be rooted is one of the deepest needs of the human heart. But the modern state, in its pursuit of autonomy, progressively destroyed those traditions and local sovereignties that make *place* possible. The individual increasingly found himself to be a unit in a sterile, abstract, uniform mass culture. He had rid himself of traditional authorities, only to be controlled and shaped by bureaucratic managers.

If the individual should ever wake up (as the prodigal son did), he would see that an ethic of autonomy cannot stand on its own. Choice-making is not enough. Choices must first be *meaningful*, and that presupposes a cultural background against which significant choices can be made. But culture is not possible without traditional authorities. Michelangelo, Shakespeare, and Mozart are exemplars of individuality, but they were also firmly rooted in traditional societies. They were substantial individuals who gave substantial form to matter. How are they to be compared to the adolescent individualism of Emerson's "transcendentalism," Nietzsche's "transvaluation of all values," or Sartre's existentialism? The followers of these philosophers all rail against mass culture and conformity, but none of them has anything to offer but negative transcendence. They are not critics of the modern bureaucratic state but creatures of it, and they can be at home only there. Nietzcheans (as the example of Kojeve shows) make good bureaucrats. c

Hesperus

by Bradley R. Strahan

Time sunders this vessel,
more sieve than sailboat.
Under a small star, across
the shadows of years we go.

Light crackles in our mouths,
so dry and bright each word
a measured note blown out
like lights of cities, sea-swallowed.

We search the shore but our words
have turned to reeds that must be
sliced to sound. Like sails
they wait for the wind to speak.

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* On Individualism, Community, and Freedom *

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"All the News Unfit to Print"

Signs of the Times

Vol.1 No. 10 October 1999

Twenty years after being exiled from the Soviet Union, Alexander Zinovyev—one of the most prominent living European authors—has decided to leave his adopted homeland, France, and to return to Russia. His reasons are summarized in the title of a long interview in *Le Figaro Magazine*: "The West has become totalitarian" (July 24). While he was thundering dissent in Brezhnev's Russia, Zinovyev was lionized by the American establishment. His novels were translated, published, and prominently reviewed. His views on the contemporary West, however, are unfit to print on this side of the Atlantic:

> Today we know that the Cold War was the climax of Western history. Material abundance, meaningful freedoms, social progress, huge technical and scientific achievements. But the West was changing, almost imperceptibly. Early integration of the developed countries was the harbinger of globalization of the economy and politics that we are witnessing today, based on vertical structures dominated by supranational power. . . . The end of communism was the end of democracy. We are living not only in post-communism but also in post-democracy. We are witnessing the establishment of democratic totalitarianism, or, better still, totalitarian democracy.

According to Zinovyev, "democratic totalitarianism" exercises ideological control over its citizens far more effectively than communism or fascism ever did. Ideas are less important than the mechanism of their dissemination. Today's Western media, Zinovyev argues, are more powerful shapers of human minds than the Vatican at the peak of its influence, and he warns that there is now but one ideology, which serves as the ultimate source of political power:

> Western ideology combines and directs ideas as required, on the assumption that Western values and way of life are superior to all others. And yet, for most people of this planet, those values are fatal. Try to tell an American that Russia is dying from them! By maintaining that Western values are universal, the media and Western politicians become steeped in ideological dogmatism which makes it possible for them to impose it on the rest of the world. . . . It is enough to switch on the TV set, to go to the movies, to open a best-seller, to listen to the ubiquitous music, and you'll find them propagating the cult of sex, violence and money. Noble slogans about tolerance and respect for others are concealing those three pillars of totalitarian democracy.

Liberalism is dead, according to Zinovyev: There is no real personal initiative and no personal risk left in the world of huge financial conglomerates. The importance of the individual, once the cornerstone of liberalism, has diminished. It doesn't matter who is at the helm of one country or another—Bush or Clinton, Kohl or Schroeder, Chirac or Jospin. They conduct the same policy. They all joined in the war against Yugoslavia, he says, but in doing so

> Western European countries were waging war against Europe. Serbia was chosen because it resists the globalist steamroller. Russia may be the next, before China. The next century will exceed in horrors everything we've seen in history. . . . The nations that have created our civilization—I mean the Latin nations first and foremost—will gradually disappear. Western Europe is deluged by foreigners. This is neither accidental, nor . . . spontaneous. The objective is to create in Europe [a] situation similar to that in the United States. The realization that Humanity will be happy, but without any Frenchmen left alive, should not be a source of joy to today's French.

An unheralded step in the direction of this particular variety of the end of history is the creation of a new U.S. government agency—the International Public Information Group—which is designed to "influence foreign audiences" in support of U.S. foreign policy and to counteract propaganda by enemies of the United States. According to a report in the *Washington Times* (July 28),

> The aim is "to enhance U.S. security, bolster America's economic prosperity and to promote democracy abroad," according to the IPI Core Group Charter . . . the charter also says that IPI control over "international military information" is intended to "influence the emotions, motives, objective reasoning and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups and individuals."

According to the Charter, the Clinton administration hopes to encourage the United Nations and other international organizations to make "effective use of IPI . . . in support of multilateral peacekeeping." On April 30, at the height of the war against Serbia, President Clinton issued a secret Presidential Decision Direction—PDD 68—ordering the creation of the IPI. The *Washington Times* points out that

> Numerous clauses in the document have an Orwellian ring that gives the impression of a vast, coordinated propaganda

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> operation. "The objective of IPI is to synchronize the informational objectives, themes and messages that will be projected overseas . . . to prevent and mitigate crises and to influence foreign audiences in ways favorable to the achievement of U.S. foreign policy objectives," the charter says. U.S. officials, and the text of the charter, explicitly state that the new information policy will not be used as a propaganda weapon against the American public—which is prohibited by U.S. law. However, since foreign media reports often get played back in U.S. media, it will likely be impossible to prevent a backwash of the pro-U.S. information into America. The charter recognizes this by calling for the government's domestic public affairs activities to be coordinated with its foreign IPI efforts. Information aimed at domestic audiences should "be coordinated, integrated, deconflicted and synchronized with the [IPI Core Group] to achieve a synergistic effect for [government] strategic information activities," the charter says.

Clinton's PDD 68 orders officials from the Defense, State, Justice, Commerce, and Treasury Departments and the CIA and FBI to set up the core group. The IPI core group will arrange "training exercises at the National Defense University, National Foreign Affairs Training Center, the Service War Colleges" and other institutions, and its activities could go beyond broadcasts and press releases. The core group is ordered to "assist efforts in defeating adversaries . . . The intelligence community will play a crucial role . . . in identifying hostile foreign propaganda and deception that targets the U.S."

An early target for the new agency could be the *Guardian* of London, which revealed some disturbing details on the effects of U.S. depleted uranium weapons on Iraqi civilians (July 30), including "grotesquely deformed babies":

> They were born with huge black growths on their heads, or with no feet, or with tiny heads, or with huge clefts in their backs. They have distorted limbs and disfigured torsos, their tiny bodies appearing mangled. These are the offspring of Iraqi soldiers subjected to hundreds of thousands of rounds of shells tipped with depleted uranium, fired by US forces during the 1991 Gulf war. . . . It is a controversial issue and a topical one. American A-10 'tank-busters' used uranium-tipped weapons against Serb targets in Kosovo.

Three years ago, Madeleine Albright proudly declared that all this—the death and maiming of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians due to war and sanctions—was "worth it" in pursuit of U.S. policy objectives. It is therefore fitting that, at ASEAN's Singapore summit last July, Mrs. Albright replied to Chinese criticism of NATO's bombing of Serbia by saying, "I am very proud of the action the United States and NATO took" (*Agence France Presse*, July 27). She further stated that the United States will act unilaterally in the future, whenever "the U.N. cannot act, because it is blocked by those who are not supporting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the necessity to try to bring justice when crimes against humanity are being committed."

Ironically, on that same day in neighboring Indonesia, 24 people died in clashes between Muslims and Christians in Ambon. According to Reuters (July 28),

> Fighting gripped five different parts of Ambon city, much of it in ruins after months of clashes, and spread to villages outside, witnesses said. Hospital sources said most of the new victims died of gunshot wounds. It brings the number of dead there this week to at least 34. "They virtually used every weapon available, machetes, spears, bows and arrows—even crude bombs," said a local journalist.

This item proved no more fit for print or commentary than the ongoing butchering of millions of Christians by their Muslim overlords in southern Sudan or the daily murder of the remaining Serbs in Kosovo. Contrast this lack of coverage with the American media's hagiographical tribute to the late King Hassan of Morocco. The *Independent* of London (July 25) noted a few facts ignored by the American press:

> When a Middle East dictator faithfully follows US policy in the region, you can be sure that he will be mourned in death as a "peacemaker", a "moderate", a "friend of the West". And so it was for Hassan II, Commander of the Faithful, as the world's leaders set off for Rabat to express their sorrow at the demise of the longest-serving Arab monarch. No mention, of course, of the decades of imprisonment without trial for his political opponents, of the secret mountain prisons, of the "disappearances", of the occupation of the Western Sahara. For was this not the man who helped set up the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, the Oslo agreement, the Jordanian peace treaty, who produced an Islamic call against "terrorism"? However much he received in cash from the CIA—and the Arab world still speaks of this with both anger and envy—King Hassan was on "our" side.

Hassan's profound understanding of today's Western world was apparent in the word of advice he gave to Yassir Arafat in 1994. According to the *Independent*, he counseled the Palestinian leader to toe Israel's line:

> "Those people [the Israelis] are very powerful," Hassan said. "Consider what they have done for you. In 24 hours they have changed your image from terrorist to peacemaker, enabling you to go to the White House, to dine at the State Department, to have lunch at the World Bank, to enter 10 Downing Street."

"Yours has always been a voice of reason and tolerance," President Clinton gushed to the king in 1995. He was saying the same in Rabat, in the last week of July, when he met Hassan's successor, Sidi Mohamed. Our king is dead. Long live our king.

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Chicken Soup Starring: The Marx Bros.

by J.O. Tate

"How can tyrants safely govern home / Unless abroad they purchase great alliance?"
—William Shakespeare

Anatol Woolf

Gideon's Spies: The Secret History of the Mossad
by Gordon Thomas
New York: St. Martin's Press;
354 pp., $25.95

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There is something compelling in reading about spies and something compelling as well about spying, or we would not have so many spies to read about, fictional or not. Our century has been a century of spies: Stories of espionage since the late 19th century have been told many times as entertainment, and as history as well. Scholarly books emerging now, such as *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* by Haynes and Klehr, and *The Crown Jewels: The British Secrets at the Heart of the KGB Archives* by West and Tsarev (both from Yale University Press), have taken the study of espionage to a new level. Gordon Thomas's new book on the secret history of one of the most paradoxically famous and secret espionage organizations is not a scholarly book, but it is based on research and interviews. Perhaps the most striking implication of Mr. Thomas's work is that, like Soviet espionage, Israeli espionage in America has been aided and abetted by Americans. The complex senses of embarrassment with which Mr. Thomas's book must be read also include a struggle to distinguish between the story he has told and the way he has told it.

Mr. Thomas has a way of regressing to a vulgar pseudo-fictionalized method to recount episodes and dramatize tales—a habit which might well be counterproductive to his aims, if these could be identified. If nannering on about Princess Diana and Monica Lewinsky is a surefire way to sell tabloids, then Gordon Thomas has not neglected an opportunity. But what, after all, is the point? The Mossad was running Henri Paul, assistant chief of the Ritz in Paris, because they wanted a handle on particular guests, such as Middle Eastern arms brokers. The subsequent disaster had a lot to do with Henri Paul's driving and drinking, little or nothing to do with the Mossad, so why bring it up in the first place? Thomas's speculations about what Henri Paul "may have" thought is destructive of the author's credibility, whereas an aside about the destruction of the reputation and career of Jonathan Aitken (a minister in Britain's last Conservative government), engineered by the Mossad through the Ritz, speaks directly to themes that would have lent cohesion to the narrative.

But a larger problem with Thomas's book is the question of point of view, of perspective. Since his interviews with former heads and operatives of the Mossad are tied to the history of Israel and, therefore, the Zionist cause, many episodes seem incongruously crafted, so much so that I was baffled as to what the author might actually have meant to convey—until I began to realize that Mr. Thomas has written not a "Secret History" but a postmodern masterpiece of black humor. Everything falls into place if we read *Gideon's Spies* as a fiction by Thomas Pynchon or a movie by the Coen brothers. If as a history Thomas's narrative waffles between celebration of past coups and recitals of contemporary gaffes, as an absurdist neo-noir the spectacle is nevertheless engrossing. The Mossad was glorious, but the glory is departed, in large part due to the ineptitude of former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and even to the interference of

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his wife, Sara, who, claiming to follow the example of Hillary Rodham Clinton's interest in the CIA, particularly interested herself in details of President Clinton's sexual activities. This offhand non-point is made early to foreshadow the revelation that the Mossad intercepted phone-sex calls between the President of the United States and Miss Lewinsky—as Clinton himself indicated to Lewinsky, referring to a "foreign embassy," as is confirmed in the Starr report. But this bombshell about the portly pepperpot is itself contained within the larger story of how the Mossad protected "Mega," the second Israeli spy, highly placed in the White House, who had helped handle Jonathan Pollard. Thomas does not say that the Lewinsky tapes were used to blackmail the President or to protect Mega, but he has taken care to establish the possibility of such a thing, as well as to imply that Mega is still active. He has also shown, without noting the point, precisely why the Lewinsky matter *was* an impeachable offense, in addition to offering a hint at why that offense did not in fact lead to impeachment.

Thus we can see that discussion of the Mossad leads to all kinds of problems of focus, spying being by definition entangled with complicated politics. No wonder, then, that Gordon Thomas was challenged in his exposition. But if we regard *Gideon's Spies* as a problem in reading rather than in writing, we have less of a difficulty than the author did. For my own part, I have found that the comic or absurdist reading is the most comfortable and useful approach. Perhaps a couple of small examples will show the merits of the angle I am suggesting.

We can easily imagine that a reader's threshold of exasperation might be crossed in his attempt to absorb the material having to do with the Mossad's disinformation campaign that distorted the treatment of the TWA Flight 800 disaster of July 17, 1996. Thomas has indicated that the LAP, the Mossad's Department of Psychological Warfare, using a "global network of media contacts," interfered in the FBI investigation of the crash. As speculation spun wildly, the LAP mounted a campaign in the media to blame Iran and Iraq, those inveterate enemies of Israel. After extensive investigations and much wasted time following false leads suggested by the Mossad, the FBI ruled out any terrorist bomb. Similarly, when a bomb went off during the Olympics in Atlanta, the LAP raised and broadcast the specter of terrorism associated with Lebanese bombmakers; again, the story came to nothing after a considerable waste of time, energy, and money. Perhaps these small examples suffice to show that it is better to laugh at the spectacle of the Mossad pursuing its own agenda through media contacts, confusing American investigations of disasters on American territory, than it is to choke on the reflection that such acts of sabotage were and are subvented by hefty infusions of American tax dollars. Think instead of those FBI agents and grieving relatives and a nervous public—all of them being made fools of by those sly but lovable rascals of the Mossad. Couldn't Hollywood do something with this comic material? Maybe a special on HBO? This thing has potential. It has legs. I wonder why more has not been done with it already.

Once the reader understands how to approach *Gideon's Spies*, he is in a position positively to enjoy tales more important than little ones about wasting the FBI's time and money and manipulating the anxieties of the American public. Gordon Thomas, like the Mossad, has bigger fish to fry. One of those big fish has to do with Lebanon in the early 80's, and the subsequent Irangate fiasco. Mr. Thomas is entirely credible as he describes his interview in 1986 with a deteriorating William Casey, the 13th head of the CIA, who recounts the betrayal by the Mossad of William Buckley, the CIA agent kidnapped and murdered in Beirut. Nahum Admoni, the head of the Mossad at that time, had promised to help, but was "in bed with that thug, Gemayel." The Mossad deceived the CIA, indicating that the PLO was behind the kidnapping:

> What we didn't know was that Mossad had also been playing real dirty pool—supplying the Hezbollah with arms to kill the Christians while at the same time giving the Christians more guns to kill the Palestinians.

The comic element of this story is enhanced not only by the awareness that Israel was undercutting its ally as well as its own best long-term interests, but by consciousness of the even richer jest that America and Israel would soon be parties together to the clandestine operation known as the Iran-Contra affair! The betrayal of Buckley and the gross deception of American intelligence did not hold President Reagan or his advisors back. Neither had the Mossad's foreknowledge and monitoring of the truck-bombing of 241 U.S. Marines in 1983. Victor Ostrovsky, a former officer of the Mossad, said the attitude was that "They wanted to stick their nose in this Lebanon thing, let them pay the price." The complicity in the murder of Buckley was another integer added to an imposing toll, but nothing could stop the party. Israel's successful policy was to get the United States out of Lebanon, but not so far out of the Middle East as to cease to be altogether useful—or so far away that those checks would bounce.

Mr. Thomas relates numerous riveting stories of cloak-and-dagger episodes. I appreciate, for instance, the way that he shows the destruction of the Egyptian air force on the ground in 1967 to have been as much a triumph of intelligence as it was a feat of arms. Other stories are rather less satisfying to contemplate. The account of the late British publisher Robert Maxwell shows him to have been not only a corrupt and irresponsible man but an agent of the Mossad who, as he spun out of control, was finally targeted for termination. Maxwell looted the pension funds of his employees to support the Mossad, which finally turned on him. At Maxwell's funeral on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, the prime minister of Israel, Yitzhak Shamir, declared, "He has done more for Israel than can today be said." What Israel had done to him could not be said either, of course. Nor, finally, what is implied by the presence of such a grotesque and deceptive man as a major figure in journalism.

Again and again, the manipulation of the media recurs as a theme in Thomas's study. Cozy images crafted for public relations are not among those supplied by Gordon Thomas. Take, for example, what he has to say of Yitzhak Shamir. According to Thomas's account, Shamir personally authorized the transfer to the Soviet Union of some of the documents stolen by Jonathan Pollard, in part because of his hatred of the United States. Shamir believed that, because Roosevelt had failed to come to terms with Hitler, the United States was partially responsible for the holocaust—a belief which, whatever its merits (though not exactly befitting an ally), is perfect nevertheless in the context of the absurdist soap opera

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or endlessly rerun situation tragicomedy of our time. After all, why should the prime minister of Israel not despise the United States? Americans do it all the time. But Americans do not hate Israel.

Quite the contrary. Indeed, some Americans love Israel to the point of idolatry. Thomas has shown that the Mossad has long known how to take advantage of that great affection. The network of *sayanim*, or volunteers assembled by Meir Amit (director general of the Mossad, 1963-68), is an imposing one. "In 1968 there were over four thousand sayanim in Britain, almost four times as many in the United States. . . ," costing several hundred million dollars a month to maintain. Thomas describes in detail some of the coups of the *sayanim* and the Mossad, including the theft of 100 pounds of fissionable material from the Numec plant in Pennsylvania in the 1960's. He has also detailed the treachery of Jonathan Pollard, whose purloining of 360 cubic feet of documents for Israel was denied by one Israeli government and then claimed by another. Jonathan Pollard is now a declared citizen of Israel, whose government routinely pressures ours to release him. Do the Zionists not remember the context of Zionism itself? Theodor Herzl conceived it in reaction to the infamous Dreyfus case, and I hope I am not alone in remembering that Dreyfus was innocent. The Pollard case, absurdly recycling, is an outrageous inversion of the Dreyfus affair, but nobody seems to get the joke.

What does it all add up to? Gordon Thomas thinks that the next thing for the Mossad is another bungle, but the newspapers, those founts of truth, indicate that there is a new prime minister of Israel and a new peace initiative. We may wonder how "new" that is going to be. According to Uri Dan, the Mideast correspondent for the *New York Post*, the new initiative is going to be expensive for America, requiring "massive" U.S. financial aid. Prime Minister Barak has already broached the point of the billion dollars attached to the Wye accords, so get out your calculator. But it is nice to know that peace can be even more expensive than war and, whichever it is, the check is in the mail. My only suggestion is that electronic transfer might save the price of those pesky postage stamps as we pay off all sides for not going to war with the weapons we sold them with our own money. Marxist analysis—Groucho Marxist, I mean—can clarify even this muddle.

However that may be, the Friends and Families of the Victims of Oslo, a Brooklyn-based association, has upbraided President Clinton for interfering in the recent Israeli elections, declaring that "Clinton has made a mockery of the sacred principle of non-interference in our allies' [sic] domestic affairs." Gordon Thomas's book on the Mossad refutes that claim by showing how Israeli interference in American domestic affairs has been Israeli state policy for nearly 50 years.

Gideon's Spies will not be the last word on the Mossad, but it is the latest. The book is important not so much for what it says about spying as about the underlying realities of international relations: I have derived from it two conclusions, though I am not sure they are the ones the author intended to convey. The first leads me to redouble my skepticism concerning our sources of news, or even of facts; the second strengthens my conviction that neither the Israeli nor the American people has been well served by its government—those politicians, elected by bluster and lies, who preempt the concept of nation and put themselves on television waving flags and making with the pieties. The Mossad is responsible directly to Israeli prime ministers; one American president was a former head of the CIA. Today, as never before, there is a radical and dangerous disjunction between the citizens of nations and those who affect to represent them. Is it possible—in the Middle East, in America, and elsewhere—that human beings might take responsibility for their "foreign" relations themselves, in spite of the mass societies they inhabit, without the distortion of governmental institutions and agendas? That is doubtful—but as Herzl said, "If you wish it, it is no fairy-tale."

c

Killer Bees

by Charles Edward Eaton

If nothing around you seems to please—
Beautiful women bore, the wine acid, the fruit rotten to the core—
Count your blessings that, so far, no killer bees.

Lips that used to stimulate now taste bland,
Wine is blue and bilious as blood from a tired vein:
Drop that spotted fruit at once. Don't even smell your hand.

Stars that always stabbed you with desire
As your arms tightened around that scented and enfabled waist,
Say time to go to bed, old boy. Put out the fire.

The unwelcome sword that morning flashes in your eyes
Calls up those images of dashing men and duels
Only to ream and ream around the room and cut you down to size.

This is when you thank those cold, unlucky stars: No hum—
A sense of some vast hostility at the open garden gate,
Ready to fit a buzzing mask upon the man you have become.

Masque of the Red Death? Black the dominant color of alarm?
Kiss the woman one more glorious time. Drink wine. Eat fruit—
Is that a fluttering shadow on the window of some all-expansive swarm?

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Exterminating Fantasies

by Frank Brownlow

"[Socialism is] the combination of religious sentimentality, industrial insanity, and moral obliquity."

—F.J.C. Hearnshaw

The Lost Literature of Socialism
by George Watson
Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press; 112 pp., £25.00

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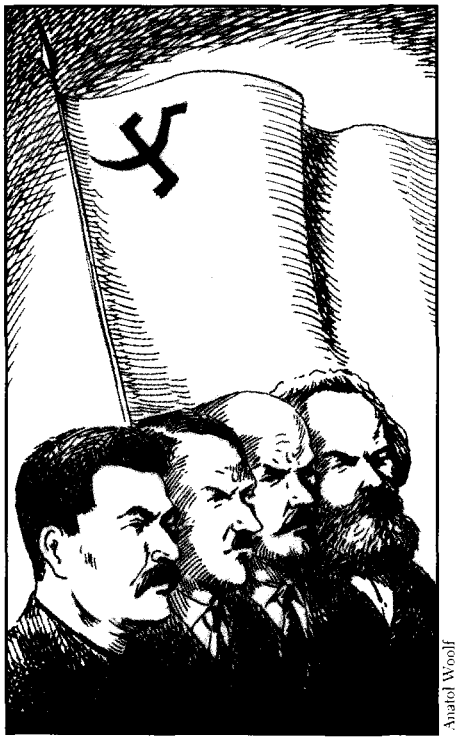
Some years ago, George Watson wrote two remarkable articles for *Chronicles* describing how the Soviets, those heroes of socialist resistance to fascism, carried on using German concentration camps for their original purposes until the early 50's ("Buchenwald's Second Life (July 1989) and "Forgotten Voices: How Buchenwald Lived On" (October 1992)). And only last January, *Chronicles* printed a piece by him about the hypocrisy of the British leftist ruling class who send their children to expensive private schools while doing their best to abolish the same kind of education for their poorer fellow countrymen. No doubt there is some cool postmodernist word to account for phenomena like this ("dissonance" comes to mind): Certainly they pose—for non-leftists—a problem that has so far resisted analysis, except in the form of jokes about people like Teddy Kennedy and rude remarks about professors in general. But the elitism of the left is a worldwide phenomenon. As an English friend said, on hearing the news of the last British general election, "You've got to admit the English system works. . . . We've just had the first real working-class prime minister in our history, and he's been defeated by an upper-class public-school boy calling himself a socialist."



Anatol Woolf

What do we make of these contradictions between received opinion and apparent fact? Apparently, nothing. It seems not to bother the shapers and retailers of received opinion that Fidel Castro—like several hundred other men of his kind—is not only one of the richest men in the world, but one of the more impressive murderers of his own people. Nor does it bother any of the usual dispensers of wisdom that, over the last 50 years or so, for people in the business of cultivating and circulating ideas, agreeing with Castro—or Marx, or Lenin, or Mao, or any of their acolytes for that matter—has brought wealth, influence, and a deeply rooted conviction of being on history's right, as well as winning, side. To offer one tiny example: In a book published in 1990, Prof. Stephen Greenblatt, modestly famous as the founder of the movement known to academic literary critics as the "New Historicism," cheerfully acknowledged that he was, in essentials, a Marxist. By 1990, after the collapse of the Soviet empire, no ordinary citizen minimally acquainted with history could have admitted such a thing without at least a twinge of shame and contrition. Nonetheless, in the milieu in which Professor Greenblatt was pursuing a career, Marxist socialism, despite ruined societies and millions dead, still stood for science, truth, and social justice.

George Watson, one gathers, has devoted many thoughtful hours to the problem of the crimes, privileges, and general behavior of the socialist elite. By reading the forgotten, unread literature of the first socialists and their antagonists in the library of Lord Acton, now preserved at Cambridge University, he has succeeded in producing a startlingly simple explana-

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tion of the otherwise inexplicable. According to Watson, because no one nowadays actually reads what the socialists wrote, by a collective act of amnesia we have forgotten what they actually stood for. Returning to the founders, Watson has traced the origins of socialism to an intensely reactionary fear of the destabilizing effects of industrial capitalism and its attendant liberalism:

> Like conservatism, socialism sought to justify the state anew and to reinstate in democratic and industrial societies the vital and vanishing principle of subordination through regulation and planning. As John Stuart Mill said, there are those who think it is good for a man to be ruled.

As Watson points out later in his book, Mill also prophetically feared the socialists' arrogance:

> Those who would play this game on the strength of their own private opinion, unconfirmed as yet by any experimental verification . . . must have a serene confidence in their own wisdom, on the one hand, and recklessness of other people's suffering on the other.

At its root, socialism, like all centralizing, absolutist political systems, has no respect for private-property rights, and one of Watson's most interesting chapters, "The Forgotten French of 1848," shows that two long-forgotten French opponents of socialism, Adolphe Thiers and Alfred Sudre, understood the movement's dangerous potentialities very well. Sudre, a young lawyer, wrote the first history of socialism in the summer of 1848 before Marx's *Manifesto* was available in French. He traced socialism's origins to Greek utopianism and argued that, since private property protects the poor, its abolition must favor the powerful and the rich and prove conservative in its effects. Thiers, too, in his *Rights of Property*, also written in 1848, argued that socialism would not only destroy liberty by abolishing rights of ownership but that its inflationary tendency, always more dangerous to the poor than to the rich, would depress living standards as well as destroy civil liberty.

How right they were. The elitism implicit in socialism from the start goes a long way to explain its later popularity among the upper and intellectual classes, sidelined by industrial and technological change and deprived of their traditional authority over their inferiors. But the most startling and disturbing consequences of socialist elitism are to be found in Watson's seventh and eighth chapters on Hitler, Marx, and the holocaust, where he minces no words on the socialism of the Nazis and introduces us to the nightmarish fantasies of socialist control that became all too real in our century.

Why, for instance, did John Ruskin, the art critic and self-announced socialist who called himself a Tory, write in support of Governor Eyre's atrocious suppression of a Negro revolt in Jamaica in 1865? Bernard Shaw, the doyen of socialist popularizers in his day, and never a man to evade plain speech, gave the answer to an audience in 1921. All socialists are Tories in Ruskin's sense, he said, and Ruskin's true heirs were the Russian Bolsheviks:

> The Tory is a man who believes that those who are qualified by nature and training for public work, and who are naturally a minority, have to govern the mass of the people. That is Toryism. That is also Bolshevism. The Russian masses elected a National Assembly: Lenin and the Bolshevists ruthlessly shoved it out of the way, and indeed shot it out of the way as far as it refused to be shoved.

When Shaw himself in old age praised Stalin for exterminating his enemies and called for a "humane gas that will kill instantly and painlessly," these were not the maunderings of an elderly crank. In the preface to *Major Barbara*, written before World War I, Shaw had already cheerfully recommended that social undesirables be sent to the extermination chamber. Nor was Shaw's an eccentric or a lonely voice. To quote Watson again:

> The Marxist theory of history required and demanded genocide for reasons implicit in its claim that feudalism, which in advanced nations was already giving place to capitalism, must in its turn be superseded by socialism. Entire races would be left behind after a workers' revolution, feudal remnants in a socialist age; and since they could not advance two steps at a time, they would have to be killed. They were racial trash, as Engels called them, and fit only for the dungheap of history.

The list of names and quotations Watson produces in support of this policy is as impressive as it is appalling: Marx, Engels, and Lenin, naturally, but also Wells, Shaw, Havelock Ellis, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Jack London, and, of course, those maverick socialists, Goebbels and Hitler, who told one of his followers that "the whole of National Socialism" was based on Marx. The list of exterminables, equally appalling, includes anyone to whom some socialist administrator of history's examination system might give a failing grade: blacks and browns, Gypsies, Poles, Bohemians, Carinthians, Dalmatians, Scottish Highlanders, Basques—the list is virtually endless. Nor is it limited to categories of race. All whom socialism could not assimilate—whether old, young, rich, poor, sick, retarded, or insane—were dispensable.

These chapters make nonsense of the common apologia for murderous socialist regimes: that their killings were an aberration, a mistake, or a departure from true socialism. Here is Watson's summarizing sentence:

> In the European century that began in the 1840s, from Engels' article of 1849 down to the death of Hitler, everyone who advocated genocide called himself a socialist, and no exception has been found.

Watson concludes this fascinating, very readable book, filled with deeply satisfying quotations from the perpetrators themselves and their publicists, rather inconclusively with a chapter on George Orwell as a writer who, like Arthur Koestler, exposed the socialist fantasy on the basis of his own experience. Then, in a brief coda, "The Great Amnesia," Watson suggests that the truth about socialist theory and experiment has been completely forgotten because it is so uncomfortable to contemplate:

> Who wants to be told that Hitler and Goebbels believed they were socialists, and that there were socialists outside Germany who reluctantly accepted their claim? Or that there were capitalists who profited from Lenin's rule? There are

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more comfortable things to believe than this.

Watson's own hope seems to be that, with the demise of socialist theory, we will all rediscover the humane, skeptical liberalism which he has found in writers like Tocqueville and Mill.

Other, probably gloomier conclusions might be reached. The bad philosophy, goofy pseudoscience, and sheer neurosis that powered the worst socialist regimes of our time became a habit of mind, and the toxic effects, for which "amnesia" is a kind word, are still with us. Moreover, in its capitalist form, centralized economic control is still destroying civil liberty, and by methods subtler than any devised by the socialists. Eugenics, which the socialists welcomed so enthusiastically as an adjunct to their exterminatory fantasies, is flourishing as genetic science and now threatens nature itself, as well as human nature. As for truth, with the concentration of the ownership of almost all modes of communication in the hands of a few giant corporations virtually synonymous with government, it would be naive to expect an outbreak of truth-telling simply because one rather clumsy source of lies has become unfashionable. The activities of a James Carville make Goebbels himself look like an amateur. As for the willingness of a ruling elite to dispose of elements it judges unassimilable, our huge prison population, not to mention the events at Waco and Ruby Ridge and our ruthless bombing of poor, virtually defenseless countries, tell us all we need to know about *that*.

As the first critics of socialism argued, and as Richard Pipes and James Bovard have argued again in recent books, private property is the only guarantee of civil liberty and the humane culture it underpins. The average American wage-earner, with half a dozen loaded credit cards and a mortgage, living in a town whose schools are funded by taxes and debt, owns less than nothing. That is why, in Bill Clinton's America and Tony Blair's Britain, the argument for private property, whatever the fate of socialism, is still to be understood, let alone made and won. Watson, focused on the history of the socialist idea, leaves the reader with the impression that socialism has been the only serious threat to life and property in modern times. In its day, it may have been the worst, but it is not the one we have to contend with now—not, at least, in its original form, and under its own names. It is interesting, for instance, that although Watson introduces Julian Huxley among his mistaken socialists, he has nothing to say about Julian's far more creative brother Aldous's vision, in *Brave New World* and *Brave New World Revisited*, of the longer-term tendencies of Western civilization.

Another missing witness from Watson's book is G.K. Chesterton. The great opponent in his day of Shaw and Wells, he, too, foresaw and would have understood our difficulties. Chesterton, who argued against the elitism of the socialists all his life, knew that private property was the ordinary citizen's only security against the illiberal tendencies of both left and right and devoted his later years to an attempt to make the argument a political reality. Chesterton's party may have failed, but the need that prompted its creation is still there. Either Aldous Huxley or Chesterton would have made a better concluding witness for Watson's book than Orwell, whose *1984*, after all, is one of the more spectacularly mistaken prophetic dystopias. The complete absence of Huxley and Chesterton from this otherwise lively and fascinating account of current forgetfulness is a sign that this book, too, is not fully awake to the destructive realities of its own times.

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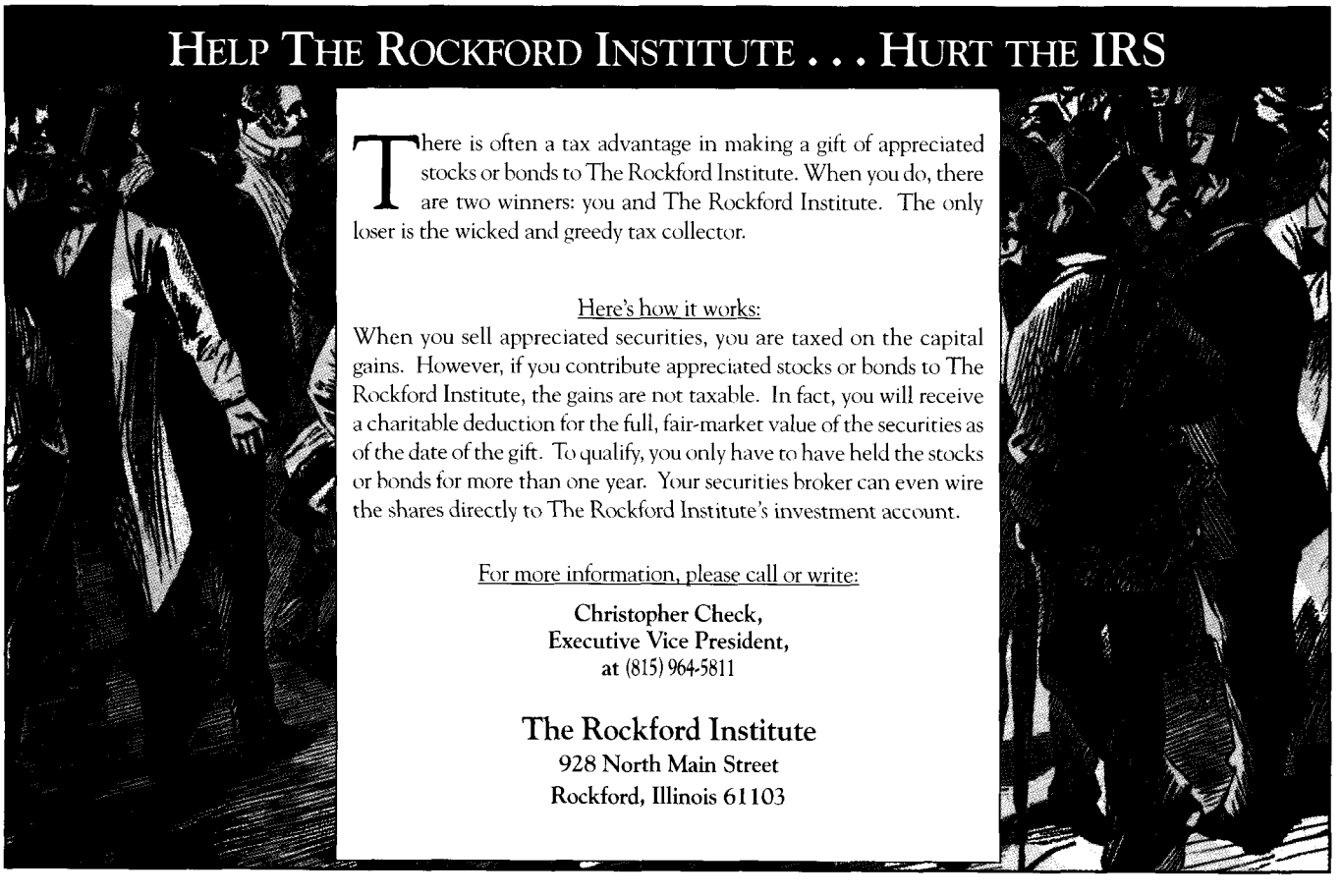
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New West Gothic

by Bill Croke

Close Range: Wyoming Stories
by Annie Proulx
New York: Scribners; 283 pp., $25.00

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The American short story is moribund. The passing of giants (Flannery O'Connor, John Cheever, John O'Hara, Irwin Shaw, Peter Taylor) has relegated the form to the purgatory of academic hackdom and its innumerable ideological ax-grinders paying homage to a plethora of multicultural grievances. In the 1980's, we had a short story "renaissance" of sorts (so, anyway, we were told) as the teacher class gave us their take on the nuances of trailer-park existence and life in the dysfunctional family. As a school, this bleak lot were known as "Minimalists" (or "the K-Mart Realists," as Tom Wolfe branded them), taking their cue from the work of the arch-Minimalist Raymond Carver. Meanwhile, the *New Yorker*—despite format changes and editorial upheavals—continues to print John Updike's and Ann Beattie's sugary-sweet cookie-cutter tales of adultery by the pool in Connecticut. And so the short story is less and less a hot topic of conversation in our land of digital everything.

Annie Proulx, author of the Pulitzer Prize- and National Book Award-winning *The Shipping News* and other works, makes her home nowadays in Wyoming, the inspiration for *Close Range*: a collection numbering 11 pieces, some of which appeared previously in the *New Yorker*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Harper's*, most of them set on ranches "scattered like a shovelful of gravel thrown on rough ground." Since the majority of Westerners live in cities or small towns, the possibility exists that these stories were written exclusively with Eastern readers and reviewers in mind: While most of us out here drive Subarus and Suburbans and live within sight of Safeway, the contemporary New West literati is composed mostly of carpetbaggers taking a high-horse view from the saddle. For Easterners, the much-maligned Old West remains very much alive.

Certainly, Proulx is a skilled practitioner of her art. Readers of her 1988 collection, *Heart Songs and Other Stories*, were made privy to the low lives of backcountry New Englanders in a land of hardscrabble dairy farms and deer hunters, where a Snopes lurks in every sugarbush. Wyoming—like Vermont—is prey these days to resort development and suburban sprawl, and the juxtaposition of old and new is evident in both books. Proulx's Vermont stories showed her very much at home in the woods and fields and in the world of physical work: Her attraction to life on the Wyoming range, with its hard climate and seasonal vagaries of weather, is palpable. She does the landscape well ("Cloud shadows race over the buff rock stacks as a projected film, casting a queasy mottle ground rash"), and has a good ear for the Southern-inflected speech of the Wyoming native.

In "The Mud Below," a rodeo cowboy named Diamond Felts refuses to deal with the more banal realities of life and relationships by obsessively pursuing his vocation. Still young at the end of the story, though his body is a beat-up wreck from bull riding, he catches a ride to the next rodeo and realizes he has nothing in the world but memories of a few hard-won and ephemeral triumphs in the arena. "People in Hell Just Want a Drink of Water" is Proulx's nod to the Gothic element in literature, a Faulkner-O'Connor parody in which the sexually misbehaved and grotesquely mutilated son of a rancher is castrated (off stage, mercifully) by the ever-present "they" concerned for the public decency. And "Job History" has the cold formality of a résumé but holds up nevertheless as a man's life and work in Wyoming unfold on the page. As a commentary on the state's notoriously stagnant economy, the piece rings true: Leeland Lee lives in a place that just won't give him an inch.

The Touheys are a multigenerational ranch family in "The Bunchgrass Edge of the World." Ottaline Touhey, longing to break out of this life, is pulled back from the border of sanity by marriage to a traveling cattle buyer, only to lose her father in a small-plane crash on the ranch. " . . . [S]tand around long enough and you get to sit down," Old Red, the family patriarch, mentally observes.

Two "New West" stories illuminate for the outsider what it is like to live in the West of the present day. In "The Governors of Wyoming," a young rancher, converted by an extreme Earth First! type, sells off his livestock and is abandoned finally by his mentor after getting shot while cutting a fellow rancher's fence in the middle of the night. "A Lonely Coast" has a cast of modern Lost Generation characters who live out empty lives working dead-end town jobs and pursuing promiscuous sex and cowboy fantasies in a local bar. Like a Hollywood Western, the story ends with a nihilistic O.K. Corral-style shootout on the highway to Casper, where two people die as the result of a "road rage" incident.

The collection's best and most controversial piece, the 1998 O'Henry Award-winning "Brokeback Mountain," is the (at first unlikely) story of two young men—Ennis Del Mar and Jack Twist—who conduct a homosexual affair while working together for a summer as sheepherders. Sheepherders usually work alone, so the story comes across initially as another strained attempt at trendy political correctness. As it develops, though, and as Ennis and Jack marry their sweethearts and raise families while periodically getting together to fish and hunt and continue their affair, it becomes apparent to the reader that their summer on the mountain was the high point of their emotional lives. Jack tells Ennis in perfect-pitch Wyoming vernacular: "You got no f------ idea how bad it gets. I'm not you. I can't make it on a couple a high altitude f---once or twice a year. You're too much for me, Ennis, you son of a whoreson bitch. I wish I knew how to quit you." Proulx succeeds admirably in this story of a stoic homoerotic relationship involving two taciturn Old West types, comparable to such classical homosexual pairings as Alexander-Hephaestion or Hadrian-Antinous. In the end, Jack dies accidentally or is murdered (Proulx is ambiguous about this) in a ranch mishap, and Ennis is left with his memories and the credo, "if you can't fix it you've got to stand it."

Close Range: Wyoming Stories is a commendable first effort at understanding and dramatizing life in the dizzily changing contemporary American West. But if Annie Proulx has any stick-to-it-iveness, next time she'll climb out of the sad-

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dle and drive the pickup to town for a closer look.

Bill Croke is a writer living in Cody, Wyoming.

Political Orgies

by Paul Gottfried

The Politics of Empowerment
by Robert Weissberg
Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers;
272 pp., $45.00

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Robert Weissberg produced the present volume, on the concept and practice of empowerment, almost simultaneously with another monograph, on tolerance, published last year. Both studies highlight the difference between a political ideal and its grim result—that is, between what people are told the ideal consists of and what they ultimately get. In *Political Tolerance*, Weissberg shows how the ideal of openness to dissent evolves from the simple acceptance of particular religious or cultural differences to the glorification of lifestyles and ideologies generally considered as obnoxious or even perverse. In *The Politics of Empowerment*, he argues that a similar evolutionary process is at work, from exhortations to help raise up the impoverished and marginalized to the shakedown of those deemed empowered amid a cacophony of claims and protests from self-certified victims.

Weissberg covers a daunting range of topics, from the Empowerment Act passed by Congress in 1993 for the purpose of providing federal funds to economically impoverished communities to prescriptions for participatory democracy and calls for self-liberation by black, feminist, and "homeless" organizations. Despite the distinctions to be drawn among these groups, all contenders for empowerment illustrate the ultimately non-political nature of the problems for which political solutions are sought. For the most part, "a decent case could be made that [the Empowerment Act] merely rewarded numerous big-city Democratic mayors and was not a well-crafted instrument to alleviate poverty." In one possible exception to this rule—the city of Detroit, which created jobs after an infusion of federal funding—Weissberg shows that economic improvement resulted almost entirely from major auto industries agreeing to build plants in Detroit. In Atlanta, another major recipient of Empowerment Act funds, the use of federal funds went primarily toward subsidizing "administrative overhead."

Most efforts at empowerment, according to Weissberg, lead to bureaucratization, increased power for the central state, and little benefit for the supposedly disadvantaged. There are two major reasons, according to Weissberg, why empowerment schemes yield these sorts of dividends. First, the advocates of empowerment projects do not recognize their own failure: "The term failure is almost unspeakable, and irrelevant; discredited theories are cherished as valued family heirlooms." In fact, failed plans serve "to justify yet more ill-conceived forays bringing personal rewards and opportunities to propagate radical ideologies." Second, the problems that advocates of empowerment claim to be addressing are often not amenable to political solution: Some, such as the demands by feminists that the state be authorized to provide "a solution [to all their grievances] by overthrowing patriarchy," are utopian and delusional.

Other nonpolitical problems for which empowerment is demanded are low scholastic achievements among minorities, insufficient public attention to multiculturalism, and an unacceptably high unemployment rate in urban areas. It may be questioned whether any of these problems can or should be remedied by applying political coercion to outside groups. Multiculturalists are free to celebrate whatever they wish to celebrate in private institutions or under their own auspices. Cities like Detroit improve their financial climate by recruiting industrial support, not by extracting federal handouts that are used to enrich municipal administrators. Those racial minorities who are unhappy with their children's grades or scholastic ineptitude can organize themselves to tutor, or to find tutors for, the young. They can open charter schools that stress real learning skills. Finally, they can and do vote for candidates of their choice, who, as Weissberg notes, devote more energy to complaining about racism, while lining their pockets, than to solving the crises for which they demand greater manipulative clout.

Weissberg raises the provocative question of why blacks imagine that their well-being improves in proportion to the public offices they hold. American Jews, as Thomas Sowell notes, acquired more wealth and influence than Irish-Americans while holding only a fraction of the number of political offices. One possible reason why, for several generations, Jews did better professionally than the Irish, according to Sowell, was that they *ignored* the allure of elected office, while applying themselves to occupations that did not require winning popularity contests to control and distribute public funds. In the end, the Irish did well despite, not because of, machine politics. They entered non-political professions and were able to prosper. The history of the Irish in America deserves to be noted by blacks who believe that once they elect—or get a congressional act to provide them with—enough black officials, they will close the social distance between themselves and whites and Asians.

Weissberg further observes that orderly government is impossible as long as people believe that they can get what they want by mounting noisy protests in search of special rights and benefits: "The easy insistence on power breeds insatiable appetites." Though "conflict is endemic and healthy [in popular government] . . . it must be bounded. Democracy requires disputes be ended and defeats accepted." On this last point, Weissberg is right in principle, less so in terms of the example offered. He calls attention to the argument—made by the American Founding Fathers, among others—that inner restraints on factional passions must exist in order to hold together a constitutional republic. From this perspective, one is justified in castigating most empowerment advocates for arousing envy and factionalism as well as for inciting the central government to plunder taxpaying citizens.

Weissberg, however, avoids the question of how to halt the constitutional derailment currently taking place. My own view is that it cannot be stopped, and that the present orgy of empowerment claims is the inescapable outcome of a deeply corrupt regime.

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by Samuel Francis

What a Swell Party This Is

The final presidential election of the millennium is still more than a year away, but by last summer rumblings of discontent with the plastic dashboard figurines who are the leading candidates of the two major plastic dashboard political parties were already audible. The rumblings first attracted national notice when Pat Buchanan, in the course of his third campaign for the presidency, emitted a few rumbles himself about the possibility of leaving the Republican Party to which he has been attached for most of his life. Throughout the 1990's, Mr. Buchanan has been among the first voices to define issues and point future political directions while most in his party and the (snicker) "conservative movement" have merely squealed in dismayed terror at his maverick positions. His dissent on the Persian Gulf War in 1990-91 pointed toward the far larger and more generalized opposition to the recent Balkan war, and his support for economic nationalism contributed to an increased skepticism of the "global economy" and free-trade dogmas among congressmen in both parties in the last few years. When Pat started rumbling about leaving the GOP smack in the middle of his campaign for its nomination, therefore, pundits were well advised to pay attention.

But Mr. Buchanan soon distanced himself from his own remarks. On *Meet the Press* a few days after his reported threat of defection, he confirmed that "if the Republican Party walks away from life [i.e., a pro-life, anti-abortion position], it walks away from me." He might leave the party or refuse to endorse its ticket, but he gave no firm indication that he would start a new party or accept the nomination of one, and he did say that by the time the Republicans picked their ticket next year, it would probably be too late to start a new party anyway.

Nevertheless, the word had been spoken, and soon speculation about a third party was commonplace. Even after Mr. Buchanan's demurrals, columnist Robert Novak insisted that he might actually bolt the GOP and run as an independent, while the *New York Times* a few days later carried a major front-page story recounting in some detail how Mr. Buchanan wasn't the only Republican thinking of what he had called "a stampede for the Metroliner" out of the party.

In fact, the prospect of a "third party" of the right has been discussed in virtually every presidential election in my memory. Indeed, the very term "third party," if taken literally, is rather grotesquely inaccurate. In addition to such perennials as the Communist Party USA and its cheap imitations in World-Peace-and-Save-the-Silverfish crusades of the left, there are vehicles on the right that have become institutionalized despite their marginal political impact—the Libertarian Party, the U.S. Taxpayers Party, and, of course, the Reform Party, which has actually proved itself capable of electing Jesse Ventura to the governorship of Minnesota. In other words, whatever happens to the Republicans or the Democrats (speaking of cheap imitations of the communists), a new party built on their wreckage would not be a "third" but a fifth or sixth party at least.

Of course, that's not what is meant when people talk about a "third party." What they mean is a political party with a real chance of winning national elections, and today, with the possible exception of the Reform Party, there is no such animal. The Reform Party might be able to win a national election only because of the strong and distinctive personalities of its leaders, the indefatigable Ross Perot and the refreshingly unconventional Mr. Ventura, probably the only political candidate in human history who has openly discussed his youthful visit to a house of ill repute and been elected anyway. Third parties have historically been successful in American history only because of their leaders—William Jennings Bryan and George Wallace come quickly to mind—or because the rest of the political establishment was so fractured that even mediocrities like Abraham Lincoln could creep into the White House while everyone else was fighting. When the personalities of the leaders fade and the establishment fractures are patched up, third parties usually begin to vanish.

Yet despite the interminable jabber about a new party, there is more reason in this election cycle than ever to take it seriously. Not only Mr. Buchanan but also New Hampshire Sen. Bob Smith, almost as firmly on the right as the former commentator and an actual elected officeholder, spoke openly about bolting the Republicans, and what he had to say represented precisely the feelings and thoughts of thousands, if not millions, of other Americans who have supported the GOP in recent years. "Right now we have one political party in America," the senator told the *New York Times* a couple of weeks before he actually did leave the Republicans. "It's run by moderate Democrats and moderate Republicans, and conservatives are stuck. If you talk to conservative activists there's a lot of frustration. I have no desire to see the demise of the party. But I'm not going to see our views compromised."

Among the views that rank-and-file Republicans believe have already been compromised—if not entirely abandoned—by the party and its leadership, the *Times* itself mentioned not only abortion but also "taxes, gun control, military spending and gay rights." Yet that's only the icing on the cake. How about the party's support of statehood for Puerto Rico, a brainchild of the now forgotten Newt Gingrich and his "Republican revolutionaries," intended to "lure" the Hispanic vote into the party; the abandonment of efforts to abolish affirmative action (last year, the Republican House actually defeated a bill that would have abolished federal affirmative-action mandates for educational institutions); and the total sellout of the immigration issue, both with respect to reform of existing legal immigration procedures and of any serious attempt to control illegal immigration? As for gun control, the implosion of the congressional Republicans on this issue in the aftermath of the Littleton shootings last spring helped undermine the support of one of the key constituencies that gave the party a congressional majority in 1994. It was a Democrat, John Dingell of Michigan, who caused the collapse of the gun-control package pushed by the Clinton White House and swallowed whole by the Republican leadership in both houses.

The Republicans no longer even pretend to be interested in such matters as reducing the size and scope of the federal leviathan or abolishing federal programs and departments, let alone revers-

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ing the damage to the Constitution inflicted by a generation of Supreme Court justices (the most dangerous of whom—Earl Warren, William Brennan, Harry Blackmun, Sandra Day O'Connor, Anthony Kennedy, *et al.*—were all appointed by Republican presidents). On the major issues of the era—globalist foreign policy and recklessly aggressive military adventurism, free trade, the erosion of national sovereignty, and the Third-Worldization of America—the Republican Party is virtually indistinguishable from the party of Bill Clinton. As for Mr. Clinton himself, he and the assorted crooks, crackpots, perverts, and outright traitors that inhabit his administration have now managed to bamboozle and defeat the Republicans no fewer than four times—in the presidential elections of 1992 and 1996, the congressional elections of 1998, and the impeachment boondoggle of 1999. How many times does a political party get to strike out before it is hooted off the field by its own fans?

"The disenchantment" of conservative Republicans with their own party, reported the *Times*, "is so intense that more and more conservatives on the front lines are openly discussing whether to bolt from the party," and they have every reason to bolt. A party that not only fails to represent the beliefs of its own members and supporters but also repeatedly proves itself unable to win in confrontations with its major political opponents neither deserves to win nor, in the long run, will be able to survive.

There are, however, two compelling reasons why a new party does not already exist and may have trouble coming into existence. In the first place, any new party that is at all successful in attracting voters will quickly have its appeal emulated or stolen by one of the existing mainstream parties. In the second place, any new party of the right in the United States today would probably be merely the grassroots of the existing Republican Party minus its incompetent and dishonest leadership. What's the point of founding a party when all you would be doing is simply changing the name of the Republican Party and kicking out the leaders? If you can do the latter, you don't need to do the former.

The first reason, the problem of emulation by the existing parties, is what happened to George Wallace's American Independent Party in 1968. Wallace's crusading rhetoric against "forced busing" and similar federal efforts at racial and social engineering was emulated by Richard Nixon at somewhat lower decibels, and since the Republicans had a better chance than Wallace of winning the election, Nixon was able to walk off with votes that otherwise might well have made the Alabama governor and his new party a permanent fixture of the national political landscape. No sooner had Nixon won the election, of course, than he and his Justice Department started instituting affirmative action.

Any third party that is successful enough to invite emulation by an old party has to be prepared to meet this threat. It has to be able to articulate its own message in such a distinctive way that the older parties cannot emulate it without at the same time undermining and jeopardizing the support of their constituencies. In 1968, the Democrats could not emulate Wallace because they had become increasingly dependent on the black vote; the Republicans could emulate him because they had virtually no black support and could expect to win (and did win) by mobilizing the working and middle-class white voters who felt directly threatened by busing and other forms of forced integration.

The other objection to a new party of the right, that it would be merely the Republican Party under a new name, may well be true, although the vast support that George W. Bush appears to enjoy within the party suggests that it's not only the GOP leadership that needs to be purged. One of the major problems with the GOP in the last couple of decades is that its members and activists have actually had a taste of political victory and like it so much that they now want little else. Local patronage, federal jobs and appointments, government subsidies, privileged visits to the White House, favors from local congressmen that would not be possible if the party were not in the majority, and the sheer pleasure of thumping your chest in front of your friends and neighbors about winning elections and clambering into office all contribute to enticing rank-and-file Republicans into forgetting the issues and voters that put them into office in the first place. It is probably rank-and-filers such as these, at least as much as the less-than-stalwart postures of such leaders as Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole, that pressure the party as a whole into defecting from its own principles and platform. If a new party does come into existence, its founders should have no illusion that it can be merely the Republican Party under a new name. Not only the present leadership of the GOP but also a sizable number of its membership needs to be kicked out, and many Americans who now vote for the Democrats or the Reform Party or who don't bother to vote at all need to be brought in. Unless a new party is able and willing to do both, it won't be worth starting.

Finally, the most common, though not the most compelling, argument against a new party is that it just won't be able to win and that, if it doesn't, it will only enable the Democrats to win. It is not particularly compelling for at least two reasons. First, the difference between the Republicans and the Democrats, as suggested above, is not so large as to make much of a difference to the nation anyway, and as long as the right wing of the party lets itself be gulled by its leaders into swallowing this appeal to fear, the leaders themselves will have nothing to fear from any revolt within their own ranks. It is actually an argument intended to quell any serious discussion of an alternative direction for the party. And second, those who advance this argument miss the whole point about a new party.

That point is that a new party should not expect to win, at least not for several years or election cycles, because the purpose of founding a new party is not so much to win (if winning is what you want, join the Democrats) but rather to sustain a certain set of ideas and principles that the other parties have abandoned or, in Senator Smith's words, compromised. It is not just a matter of waving the torch, but of keeping the torch alight at a time when the established parties show no interest in doing so. If waving the torch is all that a new party is interested in doing, it won't survive. But if it can bear the torch in a way that illuminates and leads the nation it seeks to persuade, then it will almost inevitably displace at least one of the older parties and will probably influence the direction of the other. The issue today is not whether the Republican Party will survive. The disenchantment with the Republican Party is now so intense that, at the end of this millennium or in the first years of the next one, it will almost certainly begin to evaporate. The issue now is what kind of party will replace it and whether those who want it to be born will be able to wave the right torch in a way that the nation will see and want to follow.

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Letter From Michigan

by Greg Kaza

Downriver Blues

◆

The paint is peeling on the exterior wall of the United Steelworkers Hall in Southgate, Michigan, a symbolic reminder of the dangerous times faced by America's 700,000 steelworkers. Workforce downsizing; the emergence of mini-mills to complement the old integrated, hot- and cold-roll production process; and price deflation and multilateral trade agreements like NAFTA have combined to make the steelworkers' world a very different place from what it was a generation ago. Generally ignored by the mainstream news media, the radical changes that have occurred within the U.S. steel industry are readily apparent in cities like Weirton, West Virginia; Gary, Indiana; and Southgate, located at the center of downriver Detroit, which at one time was perhaps the most heavily industrialized region in the United States. (This was derisively termed the "Rust Belt" by media elites who have never known a day of hard labor.) The uncertain economic future faced by American steelworkers is a grim reminder of the revolutionary nature of the global economy and a foreshadowing of the even more radical changes already under way in the automobile industry.

For two generations in the early to mid-20th century, the steel industry was the backbone of America's industrial might, employing millions of workers. The twin titans of steel and auto, symbolized in the 1940's by Detroit, the Arsenal of Democracy, were crucial to the triumph of the Allies in World War II. Steel produced the materials necessary for armaments, while auto built motorized vehicles powered by the internal combustion engine, one of the greatest mass-produced precision instruments of the 20th century. Even today, memories of World War II are strong among blue-collar seniors Downriver, many of whom fought in the war or worked in the Arsenal of Democracy. In Wyandotte, adjacent to Southgate, there was for many years a mural, painted on a garage by its owner, depicting the horrors of the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. Today, the mural would be interpreted as a slap in the face by non-native globalists who would sooner forget.

Surveying Downriver from atop the Rouge River bridge, it is difficult to forget the area's former industrial might. Near the north end stands the Ford Motor Company's Rouge complex, the brainchild of Henry Ford and for decades one of the largest industrial complexes in the world. Nearby, along the Detroit River south of the city, is a nearly 15-mile stretch of integrated steel mills from Zug Island to Gibraltar, near Lake Erie's shore. Several of the mills were operated after World War II by Donald B. McLouth, a local businessman whose vision extended beyond his stock options. Trenton, my hometown and a Downriver community, included a McLouth mill and one of the finest parks and recreation systems in metropolitan Detroit. At the urging of men like McLouth, the suburb was laid out in the 1950's with plenty of green space for the sons and daughters of auto and steelworkers to play, as they should, and not work in sweatshops, as they might if they lived in another part of the global economy. In the summer, we would play baseball in leagues sponsored by McLouth, wearing T-shirts emblazoned "McLouth Steel," in parks named after the businessman with a vision. Come evening, the glow from McLouth Steel's Trenton plant would fascinate us, lighting up Downriver in what we used to call the Orange Sky at Midnight. To the media elite, the picture painted here appears more that of a company town; to a globalist, evidence of non-productivity (idle hands make idle minds). But to those of us living in it, this was a semi-idyllic world where a high-school graduate could land a blue-collar job that paid well enough to support a family, buy a modest, 1,500-square-foot brick home and even a cottage "up north," and generally enjoy a middle-class American life.

This world no longer exists, although U.S. steel production has increased, according to a recent *Wall Street Journal* report. The labor-intensive production process used by McLouth Steel and other integrated mills gave way to newer, more efficient systems that rely on fewer, more highly skilled workers. Mini-mills emerged as a niche in the steel market. Men like McLouth passed from the scene, and by the recession of the late 1970's—more of a depression Downriver—steel companies and their workers were suffering horribly. Operating in a capital-intensive environment and dependent on long-term financing, they were beset by the huge debt loads and rising interest rates that accompanied the decade's inflation, itself the result of massive growth in the U.S. money supply to pay for government wars on domestic poverty and Southeast Asian communists. Ironically, the tax dollars of blue-collar steelworkers were used to build up the U.S. military and keep Japan demilitarized and non-nuclear; this was, in effect, a cross-subsidy that allowed the Japanese to spend a far higher percentage of their Gross Domestic Product on capital investment than on defense. By the time inflation subsided in the early 1980's, the deindustrialization of the domestic steel industry was well under way. In that decade, Michigan attempted to rescue McLouth through a taxpayer-subsidized employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), which makes it possible for workers to become shareholder-owners of the company that employs them. The theory behind ESOPs is that productivity improves and labor-management relations get better when workers become owners. Of course, this issue was not as significant when Mr. McLouth led McLouth Steel. According to *New Steel* magazine, however, ESOPs have not helped labor-management relations at Weirton Steel, and, in McLouth's case, they ultimately failed.

The U.S. steel industry learned from the recessionary inflation of the late 1970's, a supposed impossibility. Many steel firms reduced their debt loads and improved their financials. They changed their capital-labor allocation, increasing productivity. But even more powerful economic forces were emerging. As free-market economics suggests it would, deindustrialization sent capital investment abroad, into steel mills in emerging-market nations where wages are a fraction of what they are here and where returns on equity are higher. NAFTA accelerated this process of Factor Price Equalization (FPE), one of the most im-

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portant, if overlooked, aspects of the global economy. FPE rests on the idea that supply and demand eventually equalize production factors such as capital and labor between nations by combining them into one market. Wage rates for steelworkers in capital-intensive nations like the United States are bid down by the market, while rates for those in labor-intensive nations in emerging economies are bid up over time. One does not have to be a Keynesian or a Marxist to believe in FPE; the concept is accepted among free-market economists, including members of the Austrian School.

The United Steelworkers of America (USWA) are focusing on legal, not economic arguments, in challenging NAFTA. In July 1998, the union and the Made in the USA Foundation filed suit in U.S. District Court in Birmingham, Alabama, challenging NAFTA's constitutionality on the grounds that it was not adopted in conformity with Article II, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. The Founders declared that the executive has the power to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the senators present concur. NAFTA passed in the Senate by a 61 to 35 vote, thus falling short of the two-thirds requirement. The U.S. government's response has been to argue that NAFTA is "a nonjusticiable political question." Furthermore, the government maintains, the steelworkers, among them veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and other conflicts, "lack standing" to sue. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, more than 215,000 U.S. workers have lost their jobs due to NAFTA, including thousands at McLouth Steel when it finally went under several years ago. The Orange Sky at Midnight is no more.

Today, the steelworkers hanging on Downriver at Great Lakes Steel (owned by National Steel of Mishawaka, Indiana) or other firms in the area face another economic phenomenon once considered highly unlikely: deflation. Macroeconomic events in remote outposts of the global economy, such as Thailand (summer 1997) and Russia (August 1998), have contributed to falling prices in commodity-based industries like steel. This development is good for consumers, but it forces firms to increase productivity even more to stay ahead of falling prices. In the post-World War II era, large firms such as U.S. Steel or General Motors routinely passed on price increases to consumers and wage increases to workers; they were operating in an inflationary price structure. Today, these same firms are forced to increase productivity or downsize in response to deflation. The U.S. high-tech sector, to a great extent, has been operating in a deflationary pricing structure for most of this generation. Moore's Law, at the center of Silicon Valley's product cycles, holds that productivity doubles nearly every 18 months due to technological advances. First steel and now auto are being dragged into a deflationary price structure, although productivity gains like those in the high-tech sector are unrealistic. Unskilled, nonproductive jobs will continue to be eliminated in areas like Downriver.

Many economists are still trying to make sense of these developments. Consider a recent publication of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, which notes:

> Several manufacturing industries in the Midwest faced great challenges during 1998 . . . Foreign steel producers sharply increased their exports, doubling the U.S. market share held by foreign steel from 20 to 40 percent. This steel "dumping" caused severe cutbacks and layoffs among domestic steel producers and pushed several small firms into bankruptcy.

Elsewhere, the report observes:

> In southern Illinois, at least six firms in the steel industry laid off a significant number of workers in the third and fourth quarters of 1998. With a continuing build-up of demand for labor in other parts of the state, the laid-off workers must decide whether it is worth moving or commuting great distances in order to obtain employment.

Unfortunately, the workers and their families do not have "the option of deciding" whether to eat. "It is not yet clear," the Chicago Fed Letter notes, "how this dynamic will play out." Other facts cited in the report give some indication:

> The problems facing the steel industry affect Indiana more than any other state in the region, since Indiana produces roughly 25 percent of all the steel produced in the U.S. The state has been struggling to maintain its relative economic position over the past 20 years.

As has Michigan, where a government economist ignores steel but observes:

> Manufacturing employment has been losing its share of total employment in the state over the years. In 1969, manufacturing jobs represented a third of all workers, in 1977 it had fallen to 28 percent, and in 1997 it reached 19 percent.

At one point in recent history, steel was equated with the U.S. manufacturing base. Not so anymore, as the process of globalization continues to unfold. In a 1998 speech at Notre Dame, USWA President George Becker said:

> Even National Steel, which is headquartered a few miles from here in Mishawaka, isn't so national. For some time, the majority owner of National Steel has been Nippon Steel, a Japanese steel firm.

As the U.S. manufacturing base continues to decline, middle-class jobs and a way of life disappear for low-skill workers. On a recent trip Downriver, I ran into a classmate from junior high. A high-school graduate, now nearly 40 years old, he operates a cash register at a convenience store.

Greg Kaza is a former Michigan state representative.

Letter From Apulia

by Andrei Navrozov

At the End of Italy

◆

I am writing this from a cottage near Santa Maria di Leuca, on the southernmost tip of Italy in the Adriatic. As the luggage, including my maps and guidebooks, only arrived yesterday, I cannot really be expected to say anything worth believing about the land or the people. As for the curious inner workings of the local airport, some 50 miles away in Brindisi, these are best left to the reader's imagina-

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tion, though of course the noble Apulian race may not be blamed for the fact that the scheduled connection from Rome had departed long before the flight from London was in the air. All I can mention, hopefully, is that this morning I breakfasted on perfectly ripe damson plums overhanging the stone table on the patio, and that the coffee was good. In a way, knowing myself as well as I do, it is already pretty clear what the next couple of weeks will be like.

I was in London for most of June and the first week of July, roughly from Ascot to Wimbledon, getting plastered on that famous pink concoction of exceptionally fine weather, predatory women, and grinning men in gray still known as the Season. One scene in particular, in the dining room of Aspinalls, is still vivid in my mind, and I would like to relive it now, against a background of furiously independent-minded crickets and reedy echoes of southern voices that sound as one imagines Homeric antiquity. I was eavesdropping on a table of six Italians from Milan and two English businessmen with Estuary accents, all in their late 50's, when a gargantuan platter of lightly poached wild salmon trout made its appearance and the conversation, which had been tending to food anyway, suddenly burst the banks and became downright raucous. *Ah, salmone! No, trota!*

Before I invite the reader to laugh out loud as I laughed just then, I had better explain something. While I am prepared to accept as given that a hundred years ago food in London restaurants was as good as anywhere in Europe, it is equally true that the generation now living was brought up on overcooked broccoli and bacon grease cut with the finest claret, by which they meant the most mediocre Bordeaux. I used to find their innocence wholly admirable, on the grounds that it is always easier to find a good roast chicken and a glass of drinkable red than an interesting person to talk to or a friend who won't make a pass at your wife; indeed, I can go further and confess that I associated their innocence with moral rectitude, if not downright saintliness. "Don't you know there's a war on?" their menus seemed to say, and as far as I was concerned there plainly was.

Meanwhile, of course, Margaret Thatcher was busy loosening all the social screws. Thalassotherapy and *balayage* became the new bywords for success. New restaurants appeared every day, cappuccino frothed on every street corner in Chelsea, specialty shops sold exotic Basque cheeses, obscure Piedmont hams, and allegedly Neapolitan *burrate*, until finally, 10 or 15 years later, the once-upright London came to stand on its head like a kind of junior-league Manhattan. This means that instead of two or three coffee bars where in the old days you couldn't get an espresso, there are now two or three hundred espresso bars where you can't get an espresso. Instead of having your broccoli overcooked, you never get broccoli at all and have to feed on Malaysian baby dwarf fig leaves, or some other such fashionable thing. And if you mention the war, people think you are bonkers.

The effect of all this on the Londoners' psyche has been one of massive confusion, something along the lines of the cult television series *The Prisoner*. They no longer know where they are, who is making them drink cappuccino and why, where the husband's secretary finds the money to buy purple ostrich sandals, who paid for their nanny's holiday in the Maldives, or why the *Times* is always going on about the Internet while the BBC is discovering the pleasures of lesbian love. Now imagine. Into this unholy mess, which is the present-day, Manhattanized, confused London, walk six middle-aged Italian men in Caraceni suits and shirts by Siniscalchi. And ogle the lightly poached salmon trout as if God had put it there for them.

Admittedly, Aspinalls—now as 10 or 15 years ago, in the days before the Thatcher revolution ended, as revolutions do, with the social *reductio ad absurdum*—has what I have always believed is the best restaurant in town, in part because it is subsidized by the casino and in part because John Aspinall is an old-fashioned eccentric who has all the produce organically grown on his own farms for the pleasure of the club's members. All the desserts are made in his own house, by his own pastry chef, and delivered to the club in time for dinner with his own car and driver. But what's so solemnly ridiculous about the scene I'm describing is that the Milanese visitors were taking it all for granted, assuming that they had been brought to Aspinalls for a taste of the new London, the international one, the one without social barriers and overcooked veg.

Soon, their excited conversation took a familiar course, as they labored to translate the word "grouse" into Italian. If this is indeed the new international London, I reflected, and if what they want to talk about is plain old food, then this conversation ought to go very differently. Why not begin by asking each other simple questions like "How do you say 'fresh tortelloni of ricotta with butter and sage' in Italian?" Or "What is the Italian for *Hausgemachte lasagne mit Spinat*?" Or, come to think of it, for "*pitsa margarita, s prostym tomatnym sousom*"? Then one could proceed to pose a whole menu of still more toothsome linguistic conundrums, such as the Italian equivalent of the red or green *cazunzei* from the Dolomites, served with poppyseed butter, or the Italian word for *zuppa sarda*.

Mind you, the more this line of inquiry reminds you of Ionesco's hilarious and frightening play *The Lesson*, the less at home you will feel in the new London I'm now describing, apart from a handful of time-frozen institutions like Aspinalls whose continued existence, anyway, rather hangs by a thread. It almost seems that the surreal object of the whole nightmarish exercise is to imagine a group of Belgians in Harrods, shortly before its owner is booted out of Britain, arguing whether the French word *shopping* can be translated into the English language, or a group of Russians walking into the House of Lords, just days before it becomes a theme park, and debating sullenly among themselves whether the Russian word *demokratiya* has some local equivalent.

It was another narrow escape for me, then, from the perverted pleasures of the Season, perverted because contrived, unnatural, deracinated, and just short of surreal. And here I sit on the patio, carefully paved four centuries ago and cared for by anonymous, gnarled, brown hands ever since, thinking that the damson plums above my head are ripe and real and have a name. In a couple of weeks' time, I'll be making a journey by car to the Argentario, on the Tuscan coast, and there again I will sit, on another terrace, thinking lazily that the giant watermelon shielded from the sun by the beach umbrella is neither a racial slur nor a class symbol, but simply a pitilessly quartered green sphere which the gods have invented for the amusement of thirsty children.

And then, come autumn, there will be Venice, beloved Venice, where the world ends. Not the way Italy ends here, at Santa Maria di Leuca, or as England does at Dover, with a precipitous drop into the sea, but the way a bodily injury heals itself or an evil spell is lifted, gradu-

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ally, unobtrusively, yet irreversibly and firmly. No more restaurants serving foreign food, no more playing with cardsharps, no more American Express bills computed in euros, no more German lasagna, Belgian shopping, and Russian democracy, no more conversations about nothing. No more leaving Venice.

A big red and yellow butterfly has just alighted on my Toshiba portable computer. It must be an omen, a sign that I am right.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

Letter From Texas

by William Murchison

Roll, Jordan, Roll

◆

So the anti-Confederate backlash comes to Dallas . . . but, then, maybe not. Maybe that isn't fundamentally what happened when the Dallas school board, in June, voted to rename mostly black and Hispanic Jefferson Davis Elementary School for Barbara Jordan, the late Houston congresswoman.

Here, likely, is what happened: Within the community at large, a failure of nerve occurred, a moral power outage, leaving residents plunged in darkness. The same failure of nerve afflicted New Orleans over a year ago, when the name of the infamous slaveowner George Washington was removed from an elementary school, to be replaced with—I don't recall and don't care to; Sojourner Truth or some like luminary.

You could say, and I wouldn't argue the point, that on both occasions the antebellum South received deliberate kicks in the groin, and that this form of reprisal was unfortunate and unjust. Davis, Washington: prisoners in a kangaroo court due to peripheral association with the peculiar institution of slavery. Malarkey! Also, you can bet your bottom dollar this species of malarkey is sure to spread, two large Southern cities having capitulated so cravenly.

However, the reputation of Our Glorious Cause isn't my prime concern at the moment. I'm no nostalgic Confederate, I have to confess, despite the veneration I pay my Confederate great-grandfathers, along with Marse Robert, Bedford Forrest, and—a particular hero of my family—Bishop-General Leonidas Polk.

I don't reenact. I don't visit battlefields. For the most part I don't even read (though I stock in my reference library) books about The Waw-uh. Appomattox Courthouse pretty well settled all that. Even at this late date, the whole business is intensely painful to me, given the unhealed, perhaps unhealable, wounds it left. Heartily do I endorse Rhett's assertion to Scarlett, following the Gettysburg disaster: "Waste always makes me angry. And that's what this is—sheer waste."

This isn't even to mention a few things that make me angrier: ignorance, cowardice, and hypocrisy. Which traits are on conspicuous display in our beloved Southland, thanks to the Davis and Washington controversies.

Now, to begin with, we're talking here about education. Well, about public schools at least. You might expect, in the context of a controversy over the naming of a school, some attention to historical accuracy. Ah, no.

I'm dropping New Orleans and Washington at this point, this being a "Letter From Texas." Let's talk just about Jefferson Davis Elementary School. The parents who originally proposed the name change spoke of the school's namesake as "a Confederate officer." One Barbara Kleinman, writing the *Dallas Morning News* about the matter, called Davis "a Confederate war soldier." Hold on here. We've got opinions on Davis's right to lend his name to a school, and we don't even know what job he held during the war? For that matter, we don't know the war's right name? Makes you wonder what goes on, or doesn't, inside Jefferson Davis Elementary School and doubtless a lot of other local public schools.

"The name sends a very bad message," says Se-Gwyn Tyler, who represents the city council district in which ex-Jefferson Davis Elementary is located. Well, ma'am, do you really know that? Ever read a biography of Davis? Know where he lived, what posts he held before the war? How historians evaluate him? If this is the standard of knowledge regnant at the decision-making level in Dallas, how can one be sure the Davis critics are right that Barbara Jordan is the ideal role model? What do they really know, beyond hearsay, concerning the late congresswoman? That she was black? Ah. That, of course, explains much.

But the question isn't whether Dallas should honor a black Texas congresswoman with a large national, if not international, reputation. The question is, does the desire to honor said congresswoman drive competing criteria into a corner? Are we just to sit quietly while a dead man is vilified and misrepresented? While history itself is distorted? We're not to utter a peep or reproach? Not so much as a civil objection? That would seem the case. Back to that failure of nerve I mentioned at the outset.

The major fault in the Davis matter, it seems to me, doesn't attach to those who sought a name change. The major fault attaches to those who sat through the name-change procedure with eyes and mouths resolutely closed, believing apparently that expiation was a larger public good than truth.

Failure of nerve indeed! Cowardice on the half shell. But what a characteristic modern offering. Hush, we mustn't offend. Well, actually, it's all right to offend those who retain some reverence for the dead; we just mustn't offend members of cultures and subgroups arguing for affirmation.

A great intellectual silence descends over modern society. We can't talk about everything; we certainly can't talk in a spirit of honesty. And we know it. This is what rankles: We know we can't, and we pass it off as of no great or immediate consequence. Failure of nerve.

What ought to have happened in Dallas? Well, on the Jordan-Davis question, there ought to have been a real discussion, some intellectual interplay between those who maintained one viewpoint and those who maintained another. Some scholarly exposition would not have come amiss. The Sons of Confederate Veterans spoke up for Davis, but we all know about *them*. Why, they sing "Dixie" without tinge of embarrassment!

The scholarly exposition of which I speak should have been conducted at the request of the school board, utilizing historians both pro-Davis and anti-Davis. (By the way, numerous *white* historians believe Davis himself to have been the real Lost Cause.) Representative Jordan's merits and demerits—doubtless even she had some of the latter—should likewise have been aired. An intelligent attempt to do the intelligent thing might have been essayed. Both sides in the dispute having been heard respectfully, intelligently, an informed decision could have

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been made: maybe pro-Davis, maybe pro-Jordan. Whatever the result, the community would have known that representative democracy had, in some important sense, had its innings.

We all know that sort of thing was never in the cards. Honesty regarding race, and especially race in history, no longer is possible. Those who attempt to display it get flayed. Why, the chief of New Jersey's highway patrol lost his job recently just for remarking publicly on the statistical truth that a lot of black people are involved in drugs. Hush! You don't say such things. Even if they're true.

Truth? We're not interested in *that*. We're interested in—well, face it. Peace is what we're interested in. Don't yell at me! Pleeeeeeease. You can say what you want, believe what you want. Just don't—sob, sniffle—call me a Racist/Sexist/Homophobe.

"If there is one thing more unedifying than a ruling class in a position of dominance," Malcolm Muggeridge wrote nearly 30 years ago, without even having visited modern Dallas, "it is a ruling class, like ours, on the run. They are capable of every folly and misjudgment, mistake their enemies for friends, and, of course, vice versa, and feel bound to go out of their way to encourage whatever and whoever seek their destruction."

Failure of nerve. Coming to a community near you—if it isn't already living there under an assumed name.

William Murchison is a nationally syndicated columnist for the Dallas Morning News.

Letter From Gaza and the West Bank

by Tom Jenney

Easter in Palestine

◆

"Welcome to the world's largest open-air prison." That was how Tom Getman, the Israel country director for World Vision, introduced us to life in the Gaza Strip. Our pilgrimage tour bus motored away from the Erez security checkpoint, with its coils of barbed wire and walls of sandbags, and onto the highway to Gaza City. Soon we were winding our way through the sea of concrete hovels in the U.N.-serviced Jabalia refugee camp, the buildings sitting brown and gray and dusty in the April sun. When the bus doors opened at the Jabalia Health Center, we were met by the twin stenches of open sewage and never-collected garbage. In less than five miles, we had gone from one of the wealthiest countries in the world (Israel's per-capita GDP is around $17,000 U.S.) to a scene of intense economic devastation, where 36 percent of Gaza's Palestinian populace lives on less than $650 a year, unemployment hovers between 20 and 30 percent, population density is over 7,000 per square mile, and some 400,000 people live in squalid refugee camps.

For most of us, this was our first acquaintance with the largest and longest-standing refugee problem in the world. In Gaza alone, there are approximately 700,000 refugees, and the total number of Palestinian refugees in the world approaches 3.5 million. This figure represents not only the original 750,000 Palestinian Arabs (and their descendants) who fled from Israeli terrorism and ethnic cleansing in the late 1940's but also those who have been pushed off their land by Israeli settlers moving into Gaza and the West Bank since the 1967 Six Day War, when Israel conquered and began to occupy those territories.

From Jabalia, we went to Gaza City to tour the Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children, run by an American woman named Gerry Shawwa. After lunch, Gerry's husband, Isam, a local bigwig with the Palestinian National Authority, briefed us on the precarious water situation in Gaza. As in the West Bank, since 1967 all of the best sources of water have been owned, controlled, and diverted for consumption by the Israelis. One million Gazans are left to draw their drinking water from several brackish and contaminated aquifers, while farmers work with water that is too saline for anything but modest citrus production.

Our last visit in Gaza was to the Latin Patriarch School, run by Fr. "Abuna" Manuel Musallam. Although there are only 2,000 Christians in the Gaza Strip, Father Abuna is known as the "priest of the million" because of his efforts to maintain good relations between Christians and Muslims. As he explained, Palestinian Arabs of the two faiths had a long history of peaceful coexistence in the region and had banded together to fight off a series of outside aggressors: the Crusaders, the Ottoman Turks, the British, and the Zionists. Abuna is also known as the "political priest," and I noted that the reception room was watched over by twin photo portraits of Pope John Paul II and Yassir Arafat.

The day concluded with a driving tour of Gaza, where we saw more evidence of the "de-development" caused by the Palestinians' forced isolation from the rest of the world. Since 1967, Gaza and the West Bank have been economic colonies of Israel, serving as captive markets for Israeli goods and pools of cheap labor for its industries. The construction of a seaport and an airport in Gaza—allowed under the Oslo talks—has been hampered by Israeli authorities. Add these facts to the diversion of water and the constant encroachment of Israeli settlements, and one begins to suspect that domination—rather than security—is the driving rationale behind the continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Also, with the Palestinian Authority so dependent on foreign aid, it is not surprising to find rampant corruption and mismanagement of funds.

In recent years, this economic isolation has been tightened by the crippling effect of long-term closure, a form of collective punishment that has actually intensified since the Oslo Accords were first signed in 1993. Under closure, acts of terrorism are met by a complete shutdown of Palestinian movements to Israel. Some closures—like the two-week one for Passover in April 1997—are precautionary measures, applied on top of permanent general restrictions on the movement of Palestinians. Currently, permits for Palestinians to enter Israel are only issued to married men over the age of 35 and single women over 30. The West Bank and Gaza are almost completely isolated from each other, and visiting Jerusalem for religious reasons is out of the question. Indeed, during the closures in 1995, 1996, and 1997, Tom Getman's people had to bring the Easter Holy Fire from Jerusalem to Orthodox Christians in Gaza.

While we were at the Jabalia clinic, the director explained that they received visits from tour groups only three or four times per year. Why ruin a perfectly nice pilgrimage to the Holy Land by visiting the Gaza Strip and the West Bank? Why not opt for a standard tour, with an Israeli guide, where the pilgrims are steered away from all the troubled areas? Why

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not learn about all the things the "people without a land" have done for the "land without a people"? Or about how democratic (technically true, inside the confines of pre-1967 Israel) and religiously tolerant (unless you want to risk fines and jail time by proselytizing on behalf of Christianity) the new nation is? Indeed, why endure all the expense and jetlag when you could simply go to Epcot Center? Part of the answer may be that when Jesus said "Follow me," He was going to the Cross, not to Disney World.

Our pilgrimage was coordinated through the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., and organized by Don Kruse, a former State Department lifer who served as U.S. Consul in Jerusalem from 1976 to 1980. The tour's first objective, of course, was to see the lands where Jesus walked and the sites which commemorate key events of His life, death, and Resurrection. The second was to meet some of the quarter-million Palestinian Christians, the "living stones" who inhabit the land today.

One of our first stops was the West Bank town of Bir Zeit, home of Bir Zeit University and famous during the years of the *intifada* as a hotbed of resistance and demonstration—as well as brutal suppression by the Israeli Defense Forces. We had come to Bir Zeit to spend Easter at the Roman Catholic parish of Fr. Emil Salayta. The weekend was actually that of Orthodox Easter, but Father Emil, in a remarkable gesture of ecumenism, had delayed his parish's celebration for a week. Saturday evening, after a tour of the parish, we joined the Orthodox community for the parade of the Holy Fire through the town, then went to stay overnight with families from the parish. The next morning, Father Emil gave the pulpit over to our pastor, Craig Barnes, and translated into Arabic Barnes' Easter homily.

The following week, after day tours in and around Jerusalem, we would return to our hotel to hear speakers. The first was Ms. Dina Asfour, a Nazarene Christian who used to work at the American Consulate General and now works for Palestinian politician Hanan Ashrawi. Like every Palestinian we talked to, she expressed grave dissatisfaction with the terms of the Oslo Accords, which will leave them with—at most—little more than ten percent of the original land of Palestine. (In 1947, before the U.N. partition plan officially punished the Palestinian Arabs for the sins of the Nazis, Zionist settlers had peacefully acquired only seven percent of that land.)

The next night's speaker was Susan Harris Roleff, a nonreligious Israeli Jew who represents the Israeli Labor Party. Roleff is one of the many members of such Israeli organizations as B'tselem (*www.btselem.org*) that sympathize with the grievances of the Palestinian people. Many of these voters align themselves with Labor, which professes to be more willing to trade "land for peace" than the Likud Party of recently defeated Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Indeed, based on that assumption, thousands of American Jews flew to Tel Aviv in May to vote for Labor in the national elections. Sadly, Labor's actual record on the issue of settlements—achieved by "doves" like Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres—is almost as bad as Likud's.

The next day, we toured Efrat, a West Bank Israeli settlement south of Jerusalem. Our guide was Arty Geldman, a self-described McGovernite liberal who grew up in Chicago during the 60's, found his identity as an Orthodox Jew, and moved to Efrat to have a nice place to raise his children. Efrat is a quiet neighborhood—on the dull side, actually—and save for the yellow ubiquity of Jerusalem limestone bricks, it could be a housing tract somewhere in Orange County. As Arty explained, there are two kinds of schools in Efrat: religious schools, and "more religious" schools.

I asked Arty to compare the Zionist experience with the European displacement of the North American Indians. The question was meant as a softball, an admission that Americans had also lived by the sword and weren't in a good position to judge Israel. But Arty wasn't swinging. There was, he said, no comparison. God gave the land of Palestine to the Jews, and the Palestinians have no claim to it. Period. He later added, "Without our biblical claim to the land, we don't have any right to it," and explicitly disowned Zionist founding father Theodor Herzl.

Arty's argument represents an interesting shift within Zionist ideology. Although the founders of the state of Israel were nonreligious Jews of a socialist bent, carrying out a secular version of the grim action in Joshua and Judges, today's staunchest defenders of "Greater Israel" expansionism are religious Jews, many with literalist interpretations of the Bible. I left Efrat wondering why these scriptural arguments based on the Old Testament would be conclusive for Christians looking at the issue of Palestine. Providentially enough, one of our next stops was Bethlehem Bible College, located in the famous little town of the same name.

Over lunch at the college, I sat with a new teacher, Hanna Katanacho, who told me that Palestinian Christians felt as

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if they had been forsaken by the rest of Christendom, especially American Christians. For several decades, American Christian attitudes toward Israel have been dominated by the dispensationalist school of fundamentalist theology, which continued in the tradition of Britain's turn-of-the-century Christian Reconstructionists. Using a Gnostic interpretation of Bible passages, they conclude that the final battle of Armageddon will be a nuclear exchange between America and the land of Magog (seen, during the Cold War, as the Soviet Union), and that America must therefore be allied militarily with the state of Israel. (For a fascinating look into this world, see Grace Halsell's *Prophecy and Politics: The Secret Alliance Between Israel and the U.S. Christian Right.*)

Returning from Bethlehem, we convened to hear Israeli attorney Linda Brayer. After describing herself as a 54-year-old, South African-born Jewish grandmother and Catholic convert who practices law on behalf of Palestinian rights, she exclaimed, "Look, *bubbie*, I'm not responsible for all of these paradoxes!" Understandably, many of Linda's views have been influenced by the South African experience. She compares the bizarre archipelago of Palestinian-controlled lands (areas A and B under the Wye River Accord) with the *bantustans* created by the apartheid regime. She sees the current peace process, and the emerging two-nation solution, as an "absolute dead end" that will be killed by Israeli security prerogatives. She certainly seems to have a point: Every time a bomb goes off, the peace negotiations grind to a halt, allowing settlers to grab more Palestinian land. Instead, Linda argues for the creation of a single state, a liberal democracy with freedom of religion, full civil liberties, and aggressive reconciliation measures like affirmative action. She has a very strong and stubborn hope that a one-state solution is possible.

Some of Linda's hope comes from the South African experience, but she is quick to identify Christ as the main source for her optimism. As she put it, Jesus was "a marginalized Jew, from the middle of nowhere, with a funny accent. No chance . . . and yet!" We saw this same kind of tenacious optimism in Christians all over Palestine. In Gaza, Fr. Abuna Manuel told us that his people are happy because they are "keeping faith, keeping hope, and looking forward to this peace." "We know," he said, "that we must suffer, to accept this peace, but this is now the 'War of Peace,' where we must overcome violence by love." At Bethlehem Bible College, we learned about the college's outreach efforts in the community and its attempts to create ties with the small number of messianic Jews in Israel. Salim Munayer also told us about the various means of nonviolent resistance available to the Palestinians.

After three days in Jordan, the tour took us to the north of Israel. In Ibillin, near Nazareth, we visited Mar Elias College, founded in 1982 by Fr. Elias Chacour, a Melkite Catholic and author of *Blood Brothers* (1984) and *We Belong to the Land* (1990). His college opens its doors to students of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds, and many of his Arab students engage in exchange visits with *kibbutzim* and other Jewish communities. In concluding his talk with us, Father Chacour was especially adamant on one point: No matter what the State of Israel does, Christians must not hate Jews.

As odd as it may sound (even to Christians), the Palestinians' greatest hope may lie in the fact that they are powerless in any meaningful military sense. Thanks to over $55 billion in cumulative aid from U.S. taxpayers, Israel has routed or pacified most of its Arab neighbors and survived to become a regional economic and military power. T-shirts in shops throughout the country sport images of fighter planes over the slogan, "Don't Worry, America—Israel is Behind You." (Even so, you and I are still sending them at least three billion dollars a year!) Indeed, the greatest blow suffered by the Zionist Goliath thus far was the p.r. disaster inflicted when the Israeli Defense Forces attempted to suppress the rock-throwing youth of the *intifada*. The IDF's campaign of tear-gassing, beating, imprisonment, torture, and murder did not look good on television (Israeli television included), and Palestinians won the opportunity to represent themselves at the Madrid and Oslo talks.

Other than a handful of bus-bombing radicals—who do more harm to their cause than good—Palestinians now understand that their only real option is to use nonviolent means to win the hearts of their oppressors. Meanwhile, they continue to make their case in the court of world opinion. While the rest of the world has decided in favor of the Palestinians, the American jury is still out.

Tom Jenney writes from Arlington, Virginia. To learn more about Palestinian Christians, visit www.hcef.org.

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FILM

Oedipal Angst

by George McCartney

American Pie

Produced by Universal Pictures
Directed by Paul Weitz
Screenplay by Adam Herz
Released by Universal Pictures

Summer of Sam

Produced by 40 Acres & a Mule Filmworks and Touchstone Pictures
Directed by Spike Lee
Screenplay by Victor Colicchio and Michael Imperioli
Released by Buena Vista Pictures

Eyes Wide Shut

Produced by Warner Bros., Hobby Films, and Pole Star
Directed by Stanley Kubrick
Screenplay by Frederic Raphael and Stanley Kubrick from Arthur Schnitzler's novella Dream Story
Released by Warner Bros.

Oedipus reigns once more at our neighborhood movie theaters, at least in his Freudian guise. In Hollywood's most recent calumny of hormonally disturbed adolescence, *American Pie*, he turns up as a high-school senior, a beefy mouth-breather suitably played by Jason Biggs. When this lad's mom bakes him an apple pie, he can't resist having his manly way with it. Needless to say, his father discovers him at the kitchen counter *in flagrante delicto*. Whoa! Talk about your Sophoclean irony! And then there's this other kid? He, like, gets seduced by his friend's drunken mother? On a pool table? Major, man, major. Too bad they didn't, like, include some eye-gouging expiation. I mean, like, that would've been really cool. And maybe a chick hanging herself, too, by her bra or something? Hey, like, why not? Can't figure out those prude dudes at the MPAA giving this film an R rating. I mean, like, do they really want to deprive our youth of a light-hearted introduction to one of our most enduring classics?

Far more portentously but perhaps just as inanely, Spike Lee's *Summer of Sam* includes its own dose of Oedipal angst. Putatively concerned with the infamous "Son of Sam" murderer, David Berkowitz, and his 1977 New York City killing spree, Lee's new film seems far more interested in the fortunes of a young Italian with a Madonna/whore fixation.

Vinny (John Leguizamo, poorly cast) is a Bronx hairdresser who feels compelled to cheat on his young wife. It's not that he doesn't love her. He does. That's just it. She's too pure for what he has in mind. He can be a tiger with her cousin in the backseat of his car, but he can't bed his wife without squirming in uncontrollable remorse. Wherefore all this guilt? Spike Lee knows. Look at all those close-ups of crucifixes and Virgin Mary statues. Catholicism strikes again, thwarting yet another sex life. Hey, Spike, time to get some perspective, no? Check out those classics. That Vinny is unable to reconcile women's sexual and maternal identities, that he's devastated to discover they exist in a natural continuum—all this has a long, long history. His problem reveals a profound but hardly invincible ignorance of the moral theology of the Church to which he nominally belongs. If he had paid any attention at all to Brother Augustine John in the tenth grade, he might have learned that intercourse and motherhood are—gasp!—supposed to go together.

What has all this to do with the Son of Sam? I can only guess, but with the way Lee cuts back and forth between re-creations of the blood-spattered Son of Sam shootings and the neon-spangled disco clubs Vinny haunts, I'd have to say he is trying to hang disco on Berkowitz along with the murders. Seems plausible. Who can doubt that the disco craze sprang from a madman's mind?

At some point during this haphazard project, Lee must have realized he had a turkey on his hands. You can sense his desperation as he swings his camera right, left, up, down, and diagonally, feverishly trying to impart some ersatz excitement to his shapeless story about aimless people pursuing pointless lives. Even more desperately, he tries to lay some sociological heft on the proceedings by bringing in veteran New York journalist Jimmy Breslin, who, some will remember, wrote a tabloid book about Berkowitz. At the beginning and end, Breslin faces the camera and intones that there are eight million stories in the big city, and this is one of them. Based on Lee's film, I'd say the other 7,999,999 are more compelling.

While Lee has been routinely overpraised, there's no denying he has made some interesting films. This, however, is not one of them. With *Summer of Sam*, he seems to have tripped over his own swollen accolades. The Greeks called it *hubris*.

The late Stanley Kubrick (he died four days after finishing *Eyes Wide Shut*) may have suffered from the same affliction. If so, he had far greater warrant. Take his magisterial *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Thirty-one years after its release, it remains the benchmark of science-fiction filmmaking. Nothing else comes close to its poetic meditation on our cosmic destiny.

Although Kubrick's technical cleverness sometimes overwhelmed his thematic intentions, his films were always visually arresting. Even the misconceived *Barry Lyndon* is worth watching, if only for its scenery. And Kubrick never sought to flatter his audience with market-tested subject matter. If he had, he would not have made *Eyes Wide Shut*, a film that deliberately mocks fashionable contemporary sexual attitudes at every turn. It dares to assume that, in matters of both the heart and loins, men and women are fundamentally different and that the perennial misunderstandings between them are not socially constructed but biologically determined. How's that for sailing into the wind?

Kubrick takes on nothing less than the perennial contradictions that bedevil our lives, the conflicting claims of reason and impulse, society and individuality, order and energy, to say nothing of those forces of nature, Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise.

And so the big question: Is the much ballyhooed Kidman-Cruise-Kubrick collaboration worth seeing? I must answer with a qualified "yes." It's not a great film, not even a very good one. It's often silly, and many will find it offensive in

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parts. There's much nudity and some brief sexual activity. (All this looks almost chaste by today's film norms.) If you do decide to see it and you're a Y chromosomer, you should bring a womanly companion as your guide. The ladies will get this film a lot quicker than those of us suffering from X deficiency, which explains why I'm much indebted to my wife's observations and insights in what follows.

The film's silliness stems from its subject: erotic desire. Passion routinely turns even the most sensible silly, in the original sense of the word. It can render us so blissfully unaware of reality that, in its throes, we're ready to risk social position, economic security, and honor itself. It's our common, if blessedly intermittent, malady. Only a few unfortunates can hope to escape its imperious sway through the course of an ordinary lifetime. Trying to limn the absurdities of sexual passion, Kubrick's film often becomes ridiculous itself. It's missing the one ingredient that might have rescued it from its folly, an ingredient that Kubrick, for all his satirical wit, seems to have lacked: a generous comedic sense.

Still, there is no gainsaying this film's staying power. Like many of Kubrick's other films, it's an intricately overwound clockwork of codes and symbols that goes on subversively ticking in the mind long after watching it. My wife and I left the theater laughing at its pretensions—and they are many—only to find ourselves discussing it into the night and the next day. It also led us to read Kubrick's source. For his screenplay, he had Frederic Raphael adapt *Dream Story*, the brilliant 1926 novella by Viennese writer and physician Arthur Schnitzler.

One can see why Kubrick was drawn to Schnitzler's story. Its fluid, dreamlike narrative seems made for the camera. Ironically, it also has a charming comedic vision conspicuously lacking in the resulting film. Schnitzler tells of a young, happily married bourgeois couple, Fridolin and Albertina, who suddenly find themselves at serious odds. Upon returning from a party one night, they begin to tease one another about their respective flirtations with other guests. Soon, she grows angry with him. He takes it all lightly, assuming it's his male prerogative to find other women attractive as long as he doesn't actually stray. This, of course, is what women have traditionally held against men: The beasts don't take sexual attraction seriously enough. And, worse, they arrogantly assume women take it all too seriously. "Oh, if you men knew," she pouts. By way of example, she summons up a memory of a naval officer she saw while they were vacationing in Denmark. He had glanced at her in the hotel lobby, nothing more, but had he approached her, she declares, she would have given herself to him at the risk of losing Fridolin and their daughter. If this sounds contradictory, it is. Passion rarely waits on logic. Albertina's "confession" troubles Fridolin, but he takes it in stride. He recognizes it for what it is: a momentary fantasy from the past dredged up to spite his male self-assurance. But then she tells him something really unsettling: She would have slept with him, Fridolin, before they married, had he said the right word at the right moment. This rings true, and he takes it to be an assault on their union itself. Yes, things could be like that before the Great War, when this story takes place. For obvious historical reasons, this second affront to Fridolin's male presumption doesn't appear in the film.

Following this marital spat, Fridolin finds himself unmoored from his world of certainties. As soon as he steps out of his now-troubled home, his chaste, reasonable existence fades from view. He finds the ordinary world transformed, fairly teeming with indiscriminate lust. Women, familiar and strange, offer themselves to him as he embarks on an hallucinatory night journey into the darker recesses of his mind. The novella has the structure and atmosphere of one of Nathaniel Hawthorne's dream tales, most notably "Young Goodman Brown." It is meant to be both unsettling and humorous, subversively calling into question the easy assumptions of our rationally shaped daylit world. But like Hawthorne, Schnitzler leaves no doubt that returning to the social construction of reality is both necessary and desirable, provided we come back with a strengthened self-awareness.

Kubrick follows Schnitzler's story closely, but he does so with a solemn literal-mindedness that blurs many of its intentions. Where Schnitzler suggests, Kubrick explains. Take, for instance, the weird, erotic masquerade featured in both text and film. In *Dream Story*, its actuality is left uncertain because it's meant as a metaphor of psychosexual tensions. Kubrick, however, goes so far as to add new characters to give the episode a substantial reality it cannot bear.

Worse, Kubrick gets the point of the masquerade wrong. In Schnitzler's tale, when Fridolin first arrives, he is dazzled by a roomful of women wearing nothing but masks. It's the pure male fantasy: the prospect of endless, anonymous, no-fault sex. But he feels thwarted by the other men in attendance. They are of a higher class, and their official status somehow permits them to be at ease in these unusual circumstances. They are free to dance with the naked lovelies while Fridolin holds back. He is intimidated until one of the women comes to his side to warn him he is in danger. He is at once taken with her and naively assumes she desires him as much as he does her. When she continues to warn him of his danger and points out she is risking her life to do so, he grows concerned and wants to protect her. With the shorthand logic of dreams, Schnitzler weaves a version of Freud's Oedipal dilemma. Fridolin is the boy attracted to the maternal woman, but his access to her is blocked by men with power and position—paternal authority, in other words. Much, if not all, of this is lost in the film, where Kubrick preoccupies himself with showing us naked bodies in close-up and some scenes of simulated sex from a discreet distance. This gives poor Cruise (Fridolin Americanized as Bill Harford) little to do but wander about awkwardly encumbered by a laughable cape-and-mask get-up. But there is no voyeurism in Schnitzler's story, nor any visible sexual activity either, however much Fridolin would like to indulge himself. Schnitzler's narrative focuses on the struggle we all have as social beings: what to do with our unseemly passions in the face of propriety.

The film's intertwining verbal and visual codes underscore the point that, when misused, sexual desire breeds fantasies that gull us all. At the Christmas party that begins the narrative, two cuties latch onto Bill, apparently intent on leading him into a sexual encounter. Before he breaks away from them, he asks where they intend to take him. They answer, "To the end of the rainbow." Later, Bill visits a shop called Rainbow Fashions to rent the disguise he needs to gain admission to the masquerade. The pursuit of passion for its own sake is like trying to reach the end of the rainbow. It's a hopeless, finally dispiriting quest.

The film concludes mischievously. Bill asks Alice (Nicole Kidman in the Albertina role and, surprisingly, quite good)

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what they should do about their disturbing experiences of the previous night. Doing so, he signals his submission to her maternal influence. Alice answers nearly word-for-word as Albertina does: "I think we ought to be grateful that we have come unharmed out of all our adventures, whether they were real or only a dream. . . . We're awake now," she concludes. With evident relief, he responds, "Forever." She demurs, however. Whether wisely or coyly, it's difficult to say. Perhaps both at once, for a tiny smile of feminine intrigue flickers on Kidman's face. Instead of pledging words, she tells him they must act as soon as possible. When he looks perplexed, she helpfully explains. Using the blunt Anglo-Saxon term, she tells him they must make love. However fleeting, it's the surest seal to their contract in passion and responsibility.

And that, folks, is life: a tenuous, unstable balance of the body's imperatives and the soul's commitments. As Oedipus discovered, there are no easy answers to the human mystery. Most, however, would find his resignation on this count a bit extreme. After all, he rendered his eyes wide shut permanently.

George McCartney teaches English at St. John's University.

POLITICS

The New European Parliament: An Interview With Bill Cash, MP

by Alberto Carosa

"You are walking on water now, but you will drown in Europe." So said British Member of Parliament and Euroskeptic leader Bill Cash to the newly installed Prime Minister Tony Blair during a parliamentary debate in May 1997.

"Drowning" is a term that applies well to the heavy setback suffered by leftist parties all over Europe in the recent E.U. elections, which took place on June 13 in the 15 member countries of the European Union. The center-right emerged with the largest block of seats, while Tony Blair and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder were especially hard-hit by the results.

For the first time in its 20-year history, the European parliament will see a majority of its seats in the hands of the center-right. European voters rejected the political blueprint of the "new international left" only two weeks after Mr. Blair and Mr. Schroeder had met in London to launch a "third way" neosocialist manifesto, an initiative aimed at bringing socialism closer to the center of the political spectrum. Voters also seemed to be opposing the war for "human rights" in Kosovo, which these two leaders staunchly supported.

Despite Blair's apparent triumphs in the United Kingdom, the Conservative Party doubled its seats with 36 percent of the vote, as against 29 percent for the Labour Party. In Germany, the center-right (CDU and CSU) won a record 48.7 percent of the vote, while the socialist SPD stopped at 30.7 percent.

Schroeder and Blair's manifesto had been resisted by the French socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospen, more of an old-style leftist; and in France, the Socialist party substantially held. The real loser there was Jacques Chirac, who had openly supported Clinton and Blair in the Kosovo war. Nicola Sarkoz, Chirac's right-hand man in the European elections and interim chairman of the Gaullist RPR, lost to both Socialist François Hollande and the "anti-European" ticket of Charles Pasqua and Philippe de Villiers, whose 13.1 percent of the vote made them the number two French party. Jean Marie Le Pen held his ground (5.7 percent), while a new, anti-environmentalist formation called "Hunting and Fishing," based on rural and traditional values, won 6.8 percent of the vote.

In Italy, the elections were a triumph for Forza Italia's leader Silvio Berlusconi, whose "ideological" anticommunism continues to be appreciated by moderate voters. In varying degrees, the center-right also prevailed in Spain, Finland, Denmark, Ireland, and Greece. In Portugal, despite his victory, Socialist leader Mario Soares will not get the much sought-after office of president of the European Parliament.

These election results have broad implications for the European Union, and I discussed them recently with Bill Cash, leader of the Euroskeptics in Britain and Europe. Mr. Cash, Conservative MP for the constituency of Stone, led a rebellion against his own government at the time of the Maastricht Treaty on the grounds that it was a sellout of national sovereignty. Cash is the chairman of the London-based European Foundation.

Alberto Carosa: What is your evaluation of the recent European Parliament elections in the United Kingdom and elsewhere?

Bill Cash: First of all, it is a very considerable success for the Conservative Party, because we've got 36 seats in the European Parliament and the Labour Party has only got 29. It is a reflection not of apathy or fatigue, which is what some people have been trying to say from the Labour side, but actually a protest vote against the way Europe has been going; against the European Commission, which collapsed in ignominy; against the high unemployment in Europe; against the weak euro; against the lack of democracy and accountability. It is also a general feeling that Europe has been taken into European government, and the British people insist on governing themselves.

Although there was a low turnout, the fact is that the Liberal Democrats, for example, who expected to benefit from proportional representation, did fare very badly indeed, and the so-called pro-European Conservative Party, which was set up to attack the real Conservative Party, only managed to achieve about one percent. There were other parties, like the United Kingdom Independence Party, which did quite well, and I think they've got three seats. But the fact is that they are following a policy of getting out of Europe, and although they did tolerably well, they did not compare with the Conservative Party, [which holds that] we want to be in Europe but not run by Europe. We want to have a degree of involvement, trading, single market, all those sort of things, but not to have all our laws and Westminster democracy bungled up into a rubbish dump.

AC: There was low turnout virtually all over Europe, around 50 percent on average. Does this mean that other Europeans are dissatisfied with the European Union?

BC: I think it is not only in Britain that people are dissatisfied. [People] are beginning to see the connection between the constraints imposed on their right to have expenditure on health, social services, defense, and education, which is

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being held back by the insistence of the Central European Bank, [whose members] are unelected and unaccountable, [and] a budget which prevents the proper provision for public services all over Europe. There is a reaction against that, and against the enormous amount of overregulation, and then, of course, the businessmen want to be able to trade more freely.

The whole thing has turned into a bureaucratic nightmare, and people are fed up with it. The farmers are fed up with the way in which they are given such a raw deal, and of course the move towards majority voting for a common defense policy is a very, very sensitive question. It is a very bad move, because I don't believe that any country in Europe would really want to have their young generations sent to wars over which they as a country have no control because it was decided by majority vote. So there are lots of reasons why the people of Europe as a whole are now beginning to have second thoughts. People like myself who, for the best part of 15 years, have been campaigning for a Europe that works better, for a Europe that is democratic and accountable, [a Europe in which] people can make choices in their own countries as to what kind of government they have, are now beginning to win the argument—and not just in Britain.

AC: Left-leaning leaders from Clinton to Blair, Schroeder, and D'Alema appear to be in favor of the much-vaunted "third way," so much so that, before the European elections, Blair and Schroeder signed a formal accord in London. What are your thoughts?

BC: The "third way" is no way. It is simply a public relations exercise. There are very clear issues which confront all the people of Europe and individual countries in particular. And the idea that there is some new way called "a third way" is not the answer. The real [answer] is to look at the individual issues, relate them on a common-sense basis to the practical requirements of the people who are living in the democracies in question, and ensure that they have the right to make proper choices, some of which are quite hard choices. The "third way" is just a slogan. It is all part of the process of dumbing down, of reducing the controversy and argument which is inevitable and necessary in a proper democracy. The idea that you can resolve everything by starting with consensus as the means of achieving an objective is a completely false way of looking at politics. You have to arrive at an agreement after a proper discussion, a proper debate. You don't start with a "third way" which avoids the debate between the two alternatives.

AC: Fancy for a moment that you became prime minister. What is the first thing you would do?

BC: I don't think that will ever be the case. However, I would do what John Major should have done: effectively impose a veto on the manner in which Europe has been developing. It has been moving by stealth towards a one-country solution, which is the wrong solution for Europe. We want to have cooperation among the nation-states, but we most emphatically do not want one country [governed] by majority vote. That would be disastrous. Again, look at the record: high unemployment, an undemocratic and unaccountable commission which covered itself with ignominy, no money to pay for future pensions, and a court of justice that overreaches itself and is given functions that I do not believe a European court should be given, because it takes [the court] into the area of government. The Maastricht Treaty and the Amsterdam Treaty and some aspects of the other treaties have to be fundamentally renegotiated to bring the whole of Europe back into working order, where people can live in peace and prosperity together, but not be dominated by any one country or unelected or unaccountable institutions.

On the other hand, Europe cannot afford to continue the European Union without Britain, because we are needed for our democratic credentials, our determination, our place in history, and also our trade. The business of threatening Britain with trade barriers is unrealistic, a joke. On the figures I have seen, that would cost the rest of Europe £170 billion [over $300 billion U.S.] a year and they could not afford to do that.

Many Germans, including the German government, want a new constitution for Europe. You have Joschka Fischer [Germany's foreign minister] saying that the decisive task for our time is to create a new legal entity in international law. That means by any other name one country called Europe, divided into provinces. But we need instead to have independent national parliaments working together to try to achieve cooperation, to work within the single market to ensure you have genuine accountability so that there is a real democracy. That's why I would like to see a "no" vote in our referendum on the adhesion to the euro.

It is the duty of European politicians to sit down and thrash out amongst one another why Europe has been going wrong, and to make sure that we have a Europe which is an association of nation-states working together for the common good—but also representing the vital national interests of each of the countries concerned.

Alberto Carosa is an Italian journalist.

Europe's Hollow Socialism

by George Watson

With the victory of the Social Democrats in Germany, a year and more after Labour finally managed to win a British election, 11 of the 15 states in the European Union now have governments in the socialist tradition.

That is surprising. Socialism is yesterday's idea, after all, and since the Soviet collapse of 1989-90, hardly anyone thinks otherwise. Germaine Greer remarked, in her devastating way, that it makes people think of crinolines. But then the 11 governments were not elected on socialist programs, and nobody expects anything of the sort from them. In fact they are busy doing some notably unsocialist things, like privatizing. In Britain, for example, where conservative governments in the Thatcher-Major years privatized almost everything in sight except the post office, Tony Blair's government may yet attempt to do just that. Shortly before it took office in May 1997, Labour untied its own hands by abolishing Clause Four of its constitution, which since 1918 had committed it to the common or public ownership of production, distribution, and exchange. In France, similarly, a socialist government privatizes as if it had no past to live down, and the new governments of Germany and Italy are as business-minded as any there have ever been. Even faraway China has its free-enterprise zones. So the mood on the left is not for crinolines, and the 11 govern-

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ments, like the socialist majority in the European parliament, keep no capitalist awake at night. It is the name that survives, not the thing. It is all right to call yourself a socialist, apparently. But it is not all right—plainly impossible, if you want investment—to be one. The banners may still be red, but the uniforms are bright blue.

That makes the European electorate sound hypocritical, though I suspect a better word is canny. They waited till the left decaffeinated, and it was a long wait. One certainty that emerges here is that socialism is not a popular idea and that socialists, at long last, know it. The refugee flow across the Iron Curtain was overwhelmingly westward, and it was the poor, above all, who fled. When Tony Blair became party leader, he bluntly told British Labour that if they ever wanted to win an election, after four humiliating defeats, they would have to give up what they had always believed in. You change or you die. "I have spent my life advocating socialism," I remember the Oxford historian A.J.P. Taylor remarking sadly towards the end of his life, "and now I realize that nobody wants it." So European socialists decided to junk their convictions. "What are we going to do if we give up everything we believe in and then lose?" one delegate was heard to wail in the tearoom at a Labour conference. That was candid. It may be all right to sell your soul, as Faust did. But you had better get a return on it.

The remarkable thing is that European electorates are prepared to play along with this, which is where the canniness comes in. They are not cynical, just coolly appraising. They do not want socialism, and are prepared to vote for those who have repented of it. No point in an elective constitution if the same people are always in power, after all, even if you think they are getting it more or less right. A consumer society, in any case, has no loyalties. It will try a new brand in the polling booth much as it does in a supermarket. Besides, there is said to be rejoicing in heaven for the sinner that repenteth, and repentant socialists are not seen as turncoats. If there was once egg on their faces, in the days of Clause Four, they have taken good care to wipe it off. They wear business suits, lunch and dine with businessmen, accept a widening gap between rich and poor, and talk the language of the boardroom as if making money were the only game in town.

Which of course it is, though you sometimes wonder why it took them a century and more to notice it. Wiping off the egg was a good idea, but it is still a question why they were content to wear it for so long. There were convincing reasons, after all, why socialism was always unlikely to favor the poor. It was highly monopolistic, for one thing, and monopoly traditionally favors the wealthy and the privileged. You would expect the rich (or those keen to be rich) to want nationalization and the poor to want competition. That is a familiar pattern in the United States, where, since the time of Theodore Roosevelt, antitrust laws have been designed to keep robber barons under control. But state monopoly is a perfect territory for a robber baron; the rich can exploit socialism, and did. In *Witness to History*, Armand Hammer has told how Lenin gave him a free hand with certain commodities in the infant Soviet Union and guaranteed him something no free economy can offer—an immunity from strikes. Like Hitler after him, Lenin nationalized the labor unions. Capitalists can make big money out of socialism if they play it right, and the young Hammer, whose father Julius had helped to found the American Communist Party, had no intention of being a poor man.

State monopoly has a history, one far older than socialism. Older, too, than the free market, which is barely two centuries old as an idea and even younger as a fact. Elizabeth I of England, who has never been a heroine of the left, sold monopolies to her courtiers to fill her exchequer. The Pharaohs in ancient Egypt had state monopolies, and not just for building pyramids. For most of human history, monopoly has been naturally seen as right-wing. It existed to favor the privileged.

There is more egg to come, or (to put it another way) we are still under the yolk. Another great myth of socialism, in its day, was that economic planning favored the poor. It was never quite explained why, and those who believed it were never good at offering convincing answers. Planning means planners, after all, and planners make for comfortable bureaucracies with tenured, pensionable posts, the pensions being cozily indexed against inflation. It is not usually the poor or uneducated who get such jobs. Power favors the powerful, and the most certain effect of economic planning is that it ensures the creature comforts of those who plan. The hefty privileges of the Soviet *nomenklatura*—town houses and country houses, opera boxes and chauffeur-driven cars staffed by servants paid out of state funds—are a memory that will not quickly die. Socialist privilege was patent. As an old New York Trotskyite sadly remarked years ago after a visit to the Soviet Union: "I'll take my chance in the capitalist jungle."

Socialism, at least in its democratic form, could be good news for even the stock market. In the quarter-century after 1966, the London stock market performed over twice as well under Labour as under the Conservatives (31 percent a year as against 12 percent); and in November 1991, the *Daily Telegraph*, a London newspaper of impeccably Conservative credentials, reminded investors that the market had more than tripled in 1974-9, when Labour was last in power. The reasons are likely many, but some of them, though predictable, were not widely predicted. It is not just fear of inflation; in fact, inflation averaged only two percent higher per year under socialist governments. But when you nationalize and pay compensation, as Labour did, you pour millions into the market, if there is reinvestment; when you privatize, as Conservatives did, you drain existing shares of support in favor of a new flotation. So nationalization tends to drive the market up, privatization to drag it down. Investment managers were well aware of all this, but it was seldom mentioned in public debate, and it is doubtful if any socialist, in his worst nightmare, ever dreamed of it. Difficult to go on being a socialist if you did.

Another truth seldom mentioned is that socialism was bad news for state welfare. Many European governments, socialist or not, are now busily looking for ways to curb the inexorable rise of welfare spending—usually by raising charges, targeting payments to the needy, and enforcing job-seeking as a condition of benefits. There is usually a cry of protest from the left when they do, and if the government calls itself socialist, it is often suggested that it is betraying its traditions.

That shows how little the left knows about its traditions. State welfare was born in 1883, the year of Marx's death, when Count Bismarck, a conservative monarchist, introduced workers' health provisions in Prussia. When Asquith became British prime minister a quarter-century later, in 1908, he founded the British welfare state with pensions for the aged, and members of his government

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such as David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill visited Prussia to see how its system worked. Labour members numbered several dozens in that parliament, and they showed no interest whatever in such reforms. They had been elected with one purpose only: to change the laws that restricted the unions. A welfare state meant nothing to them.

Between the world wars, conservative governments widened welfare provisions, and again Labour was unimpressed. If you are trying to abolish capitalism, it makes no sense to humanize it. In 1942, at the height of World War II, William Beveridge wrote a report that led to a national health service. It corresponded to nothing in socialist policies, and the Labour leaders derided it. Beveridge has left a record of their opposition in a memoir called *Power and Influence*. By the 1945 general election, they had been forced to concede the principle, and all the parties, including the conservatives under Churchill's leadership, were committed to the measure. Beveridge, who was never a socialist, lived to be shocked by the readiness of Labour leaders to take credit for national health. Above all, he hated the phrase "socialized medicine" as inaccurate and tendentious, and the contributory health scheme that Britain has enjoyed since 1948 always left room for a large and growing private sector.

In Europe at large, similarly, there is no historical connection between socialism and social welfare. By the 1950's, France, Germany, and Benelux, under religious coalitions, had more extensive welfare provisions than Britain after six years of Labour; and when the two Germanys became one in 1990-91, it was discovered that the welfare provision of the capitalist West was at least twice that of the socialist East. Socialism was stingy. For one thing, it was incapable of creating the wealth that high welfare spending demands. For another, its ruling elites were more interested in lining their own pockets. Now the story is out. In February 1991, Todor Zhivkov, the former communist dictator of Bulgaria, cheerfully admitted at his trial in Sofia that his huge gifts to friends and relatives were normal before the Soviet collapse. "This was the situation in all socialist countries." He was right. Any centralized economy is a honeypot, especially in a one-party state, and you sweeten your friends out of the public purse.

That is a paradox still to be digested. On a long view, extravagant welfare spending seems to be an aberration of capitalism. New York City has been close to bankruptcy for no less a reason, and no one doubts that New York is capitalist. When I first knew California, in the flourishing days of the 1960's, it offered a wide-open access to higher education, unknown in any socialist state on earth, called the University of California. Or consider this contrast from a grimmer age. In the early 1930's, at the depth of the Depression, America had soup kitchens while Ukrainian peasants starved to death. A soup kitchen may not be much, but it is better than dying in the fields.

So whether you look to the top or the bottom of the scale, capitalism is more generous than socialism. The phenomenon seems to be general, and it is still to be observed in the two Koreas or the two Chinas. To be sure, capitalism has more to be generous with. But no one should discount the possibility that a free market is more generous than a state economy *by its nature*. It offers its people a chance to prosper, which is itself a generous instinct, whatever the outcome. If it is a democracy, it carries within it a powerful motive to let no one starve, since elections are not won on famine. Socialism, by contrast, offers monopoly ruled by an elite which, if you are lucky, dispenses favors to those who are not too proud to beg for them.

Nonetheless, the egg has been well and truly wiped from the face, and surprisingly few ex-socialists are ashamed of themselves. "Have you never believed in Father Christmas?" Danis Healey remarked, when asked why he had been an active member of the Communist Party as an Oxford student before the war. He later became deputy leader of the Labour Party and is now a member of the House of Lords, so communists can come a long way. On the other hand, Lord Healey has an interesting point. When you are young, you see politics as a moral drama, and fall in love with what Michael Foot, another Labour leader, has called the politics of paradise. Later you come to see it for what it is: a clutch of difficult, even intractable problems like Kosovo or Ulster.

The point needs to be pushed further home. When you are young you do not know much, and that helps a lot when you are asked to accept that socialism favors the poor. You probably do not know that socialism once starved millions in the Ukraine. You probably do not know that conservatives and liberals, not socialists, pioneered the welfare state, at a time when socialists were indifferent or hostile. Where, in the writings of Marx and Engels, do you find any proposal for a national health service? Still less do you know that socialism means rule by an elite, and that Marx and Lenin openly conceded that it did. You have neither read much nor seen much. And if you were at Oxford, you may not even have heard of the University of California. So there are times when ignorance helps. Sometimes it is the only thing that does.

George Watson, a Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, is the author, most recently, of The Lost Literature of Socialism *(Lutterworth).*

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Why Democracy Won't Work in Russia

by W. Bruce Lincoln

Russia is in crisis again. Bad debts, devalued currency, corrupt officials, a political system that verges on paralysis, competing visions of the future that allow no room for compromise—the list of problems grows longer as its components become more complex.

Observers attribute the crisis to the huge difficulties connected with trying to transform a once-inert socialist economy into a dynamic capitalist one. They see the crushing weight of Russia's Soviet heritage as the evil force underlying these problems. And they hope for a knight in shining armor to save Mother Russia in her hour of need.

Hopeful Western observers (and not a few opportunistic Russians courting Western support) insist that the knight will wear the mantle of Western-style democracy. But the facts of Russian history argue otherwise. Not only has Russia not tried democracy until now, but its history shows that its leaders have always attempted to solve its many crises by anti-democratic means.

The currents of Russia's anti-demo-

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cratic heritage run broad and deep. More than 70 years of Soviet life instilled attitudes that worked against democratic institutions. And, except for a few decades before the Revolution of 1917, Russia's historical experience under the Romanovs followed the same course. Russia's historical legacy calls upon its leaders to command and its people to obey. Taking responsibility for their nation's destiny is not something that ordinary Russians have done in the past. Nor do they seem ready to do so now.

Whether Romanov or Soviet, Russia's heritage is autocratic. Reform in Russia has always come from above, from a czar or commissar who has imposed change upon a nation of self-serving interest groups that have been unwilling to think in terms of national interest. Russia's masses have not been accustomed to serving their nation. They have instead served rulers who have imposed national service upon them.

In the past, national interest has been a matter for Russia's rulers to define. And progress toward national goals has usually come when those rulers decided that the nation's interests required change. This was true of Peter the Great and Alexander II (who freed 45 million serfs and state peasants from bondage in the 1860's). It was also true of Lenin and Stalin, and more recently Gorbachev.

The belief that reform must be imposed from above has made Russia's rulers jealous of their power. That principle has lain at the heart of their policies, and it has stood in the way of every effort to draw the Russians more directly into public life. Open participation in civic affairs—what the Russians nowadays call *glasnost*—has been tried only rarely in the past, and almost always with unfortunate results.

Whenever Russia's rulers have tried to open public debate about their nation's course, they have inevitably confronted the dilemma posed by popular expectations that rise more quickly than their ability (or willingness) to meet them. Catherine the Great initiated a public debate on Russia's relationship to the West in the 1760's, but she had to end her experiment when attention shifted from the issues of culture and enlightenment to the problems posed by serfdom and the arbitrary authority it encouraged.

Alexander II tried *glasnost* at the beginning of the Great Reform era in the 1860's, only to be obliged to cut the debate short when it began to question the viability of autocracy itself. And a century and a quarter later, Gorbachev saw his effort to open public debate about the shortcomings of communism destroy the Soviet Union in the space of six short years.

Difficulties with *glasnost* in the past have shown Russia's rulers that any public participation in government can threaten their ability to impose change from above. And the fact that the Russians have historically been either too divided or self-interested to think in terms of their nation's best interests has made rulers hesitant to relinquish their power to impose change. Too often, the alternative to a strong and determined ruler has been a society fragmented to the point where all sense of national interest has been lost. We are seeing that today, in the conflicts within the Duma and the tensions between the Duma and Yeltsin's government.

Russians today simply lack that sense of civic responsibility that underlies the proper functioning of democratic institutions in the West. Men and women made cynical by the blatant abuses of power they witnessed during the Soviet era do not understand that, in a democratic society, citizens are expected to take responsibility for the well-being of their communities and their neighbors. Most of all, citizens in a democracy must take responsibility for themselves, but there is no deep-rooted sense among present-day Russians that requires them to think of their nation's welfare, pay their taxes, and discharge their justly-contracted debts.

Yeltsin's government (as Russian governments have done for hundreds of years) continues to exploit its citizens by devaluing the currency and defaulting on loans. Its citizens continue to respond by evading taxes and embezzling government funds. Russia's leaders do not understand that a government has to be based on promises made and promises kept. Nor do citizens understand that democracy requires them to honor and serve any government the people elect to represent them.

Although Russians have traditionally been willing to bow to their rulers' authority, there was a brief time when a broadly based sense of civic responsibility seemed about to take root. The Great Reforms of the 1860's and 1870's not only freed millions of serfs, but also created new institutions of local self-government, a modern judicial system, and a citizen army. These required the Russians to take responsibility for themselves, their communities, and the defense of their country as citizens are supposed to do. Such changes did not come overnight, but by the end of the 19th century, they had taken firm root.

For a time at the beginning of this century, this growing sense of civic responsibility led Russia's citizens to seek a voice in determining their nation's destiny. Some believed that czar and people should unite in a monarchical or democratic polity. Others shared a more revolutionary vision, in which the will of the people alone could determine Russia's course. And both groups looked toward a future in which the voices of citizens would be heard. Both argued that making one's voice heard was a citizen's duty.

In 1917, conflicts between these two visions of Russia's future led to a revolution that destroyed the sense of civic responsibility that had begun to take shape. Lenin and his triumphant Bolsheviks shaped Russia's political values around party loyalty and party discipline, not the civic virtues that encouraged independent thought and dissent. Many of the men and women whose call for civic responsibility had played a part in bringing on the Revolution fled abroad. Those who remained in Russia disappeared into execution chambers and forced labor camps.

By the time Stalin seized power in 1928, all vestiges of an independent citizenry had been swept from Russia. Because there was no place in a society governed by party discipline for the sort of civic responsibility that could lead to disagreement or dissent, the all-powerful Soviet state took charge of its citizens' welfare. In the long term, this may have been the most corrosive of all the legacies that the Soviet experience bequeathed.

In return for guaranteeing the minimum of human needs and social benefits required for survival, the Soviet state deprived its citizens of any power to shape their lives. Russians had to pay lip service to the principles that would best enable them to get ahead in a world in which the state held command of life's luxuries and necessities.

In Soviet times, the state spoke in the name of the people, while each person sought to wrest whatever he could from the state. State propaganda applauded the people's participation in state-controlled civic life, but in reality it was every person for himself, with each trying to

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serve as many narrow personal interests as possible. It became every citizen's task to negotiate directly with the state for the small perquisites that could make life better.

A better apartment, a free vacation, tickets to the opera, and access to special stores became each person's urgent concerns. For what separated poverty from luxury in Soviet Russia was neither wealth nor talent, but the favor of the state. That favor could be purchased only by loyalty, and expressions of that loyalty were expected at every level of human endeavor. In such a society, the possibilities for corruption were endless. The moral imperatives that go hand-in-hand with civic responsibility in democratic societies simply had no place or meaning in Russia after 1928.

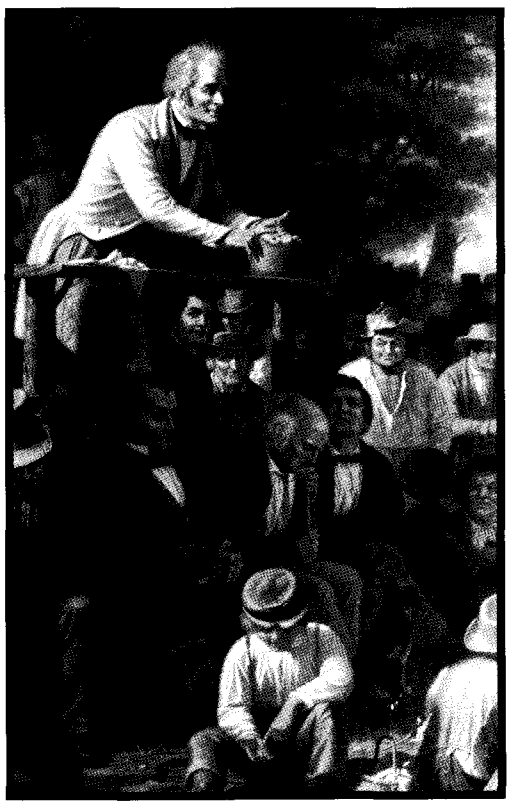
Whether looked at from the perspective of decades or centuries, such historical experiences are not the material from which democratic societies are easily fashioned. The hard truth may be that Russia's is not the sort of experience from which democracy can be forged at all. For centuries, reform, progress, change, law and order, the definition of national priorities and interests, and the visions of where Russia needs to go and what its future ought to be all have been handed down from above. It is small wonder, then, that the Russians are carrying little sense of civic responsibility with them as they approach the 21st century. The belief that one must answer for oneself and one's community cannot be legislated into being, nor is it one of those self-evident truths that are destined to be eagerly seized upon whenever the forces of history make it available.

Few people would deny that a great deal of Western money is stolen by Russian officials, bankers, and businessmen. Money from the West simply creates more opportunities for the sorts of corruption in which Russians have engaged for centuries. "We all steal," one of Peter the Great's closest advisers remarked at the beginning of the 18th century. "The only difference is that some of us do it on a larger and more conspicuous scale." Bolstered by the eradication of civic responsibility that the Soviet experience demanded, that statement is more true today than ever before.

Although it has deprived them of those values and experiences that lie at the heart of the successful workings of democracy, history has given the Russians a powerful sense of national pride. At different times, Russia has claimed to be the last refuge of true Christianity and the forerunner of the new communist world order. It helped to rid Europe of the tyranny of Napoleon, played a key part in the destruction of Nazi Germany, and reigned as one of the world's two superpowers for more than 40 years.

Of these claims and accomplishments, the Russians are intensely—and justifiably—proud. Being reduced to the status of poor cousins in the community of great powers is not something that they can accept with good grace. If the experiment with democracy fails to restore the Russians to the place in world affairs that they consider to be rightfully theirs, then one can expect to see leaders and people embrace those principles that have served them so well in the past. In that case, they will turn sharply away from democracy and re-establish those regimes that marshaled the nation's human, political, and economic resources with so much success in days gone by. The impact of such a turn is difficult to calculate. But it certainly will take Russia in a very different direction from the one that Western leaders want it to follow.

W. Bruce Lincoln is Distinguished Research Professor of History at Northern Illinois University.



MAIN STREET

THE MAIN STREET SPEAKERS BUREAU

Anarcho-Tyranny, the Balkans, Bullfighting, Crime, the Culture War, Defense, Education, Federalism, Fertility, Gambling, Greek, Guns, *Homo Economicus*, Immigration, the Interstate Highway System, Islam, Judicial Tyranny, Kosovo, Latin, Lyric Poetry, Marriage and Family, Middle American Rebels, Nationalism, the Old West, Politics, Private Justice, Quantum Mechanics, Revenge, School Consolidation, Subsidiarity, the Tenth Amendment, Trade, the United Nations, Vouchers, Welfare, the X-*Files*, Yugoslavia, Zoning . . .

Is there anything *Chronicles* editors can't speak on?
(Okay, we're still looking for a physicist.)

For a complete list of speakers and topics, contact Aaron Wolf at (815) 964-5811

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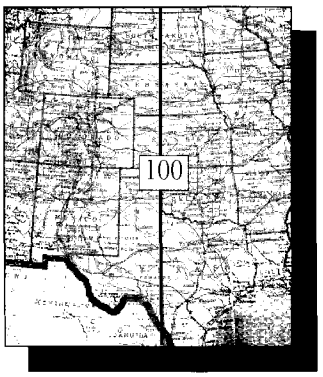
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Backtracking for Home



I was gone from Wyoming less than two years, not so long as to forget, just enough for the shock of recognition to be poignant. The cold northern skies, the tilted mesas tinged green with sagebrush and purple with lupin, and how they smell after rain; the dark, distant mountains whose mottling snows above timberline merge with the piling summer clouds; the lucid green aspen forests hemmed by black timber; the high mountain meadows, designated "parks" by the British-born Mountain Men struck by their seemingly human regularity; the willowy meanders in the floodplains, the buck-and-pole fences, all the pretty flowers. . . . It's good to be home in Wyoming again. Racial memory is a politically incorrect theory which stands a good chance of having reality behind it nonetheless. Seeing Wyoming for the first time at the age of 30, I had a feeling of total and immediate acceptance amounting to identity. Nineteen years later, watching *Braveheart* with Billie Jean Redemeyer and Wally Roney on their cattle ranch in the northern Sacramento Valley, I finally understood why when an early scene of a talus peak in Scotland rising above a mountain lake with a stand of dwarf pine in the foreground created a momentary illusion of the High Uinta Mountains along the Utah-Wyoming border. I have never visited the north of Scotland where my ancestors in untold generations froze and throve amid gorse, naked rock, and mist—things my Celtic blood remembered, though in 1977 they were still "new" to me.

I'm in southeastern Wyoming now, not southwestern; Laramie rather than Kemmerer, 290 road miles away: a university town instead of a coal one, oriented to Denver rather than Salt Lake City, capital of Greater Mormonlandia. Going C.P. Snow one better, Laramie has three cultures, not two: the University of Wyoming, the ranching community, and the townies—the people who sell you Budweiser and boots and the students computers and condoms; who fix your roof when it leaks and collect the local property taxes. In the bars downtown, good foreign beer is on tap, and there are plenty of interesting people to talk to. In the Buckhorn, where locals and rural outlanders gather (along with plenty of the college kids) after work and getting into a fistfight is as easy as running up your credit card at the mall, the conversation has to do with sports, big-game hunting, and women; across the street and around the corner at Café Jacques, the barman is ready to take on anyone disputing his views of Cormac McCarthy's novels, and a geologist with UW describes the ruins of a Spanish hacienda he discovered last summer in the desert north of Magdalena, New Mexico. After nine o'clock at night during Jubilee Days, squad cars pause beside the open doors of the bars while the drivers search out the faces of familiar drunks, and departing patrons are liable to a tail or else a police escort until they've had a chance to demonstrate their legal sobriety behind the wheel. In a town where (the Matthew Shepard case to the contrary) crime is nearly nonexistent and the undergraduates are trying to outdrink the cowboys who are trying to put the university faculty under the table, DWI apparently is the Laramie PD's chief concern.

I imagine Laramie, Wyoming, a town built in the middle of a mature cottonwood forest (tough on the allergy-prone, the cottonwood is nevertheless about the only tree that will grow here) to be a Western version of Oxford, Mississippi, in Faulkner's day: a university town that is also a rural seat and regional hub. With less than 27,000 residents (by the 1990 census), it doesn't look to have changed much in the last 50 years; certainly not in the 20 I have known it. The downtown business district, earmarked for historical preservation years ago, is dominated by the slim sandstone spire of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church lifting above the two-storey red-brick façades and flat roofs, everything within a block or two of the railyards where the Union Pacific trains rumble between Cheyenne and Rawlins, regular and confident as if commercial flight and the trucking industry were totally unheard of. The old residential district where I live, three blocks from the university, looks as much Midwestern as Western: handsome clapboard bungalows and stucco ones, brick houses, and tall, gabled buildings shaded by the massy cottonwoods and grown up around with old lilac bushes and pleasant flower gardens (the one belonging to my neighbor across the way is exemplary). The streets are named for presidents of the United States during the First American Empire, and also Civil War generals (fighting on the Union side, of course, which didn't have many good ones) who came West, after they freed the slaves, to butcher the Plains Indians. Their names are carefully inscribed in the curbstones at the intersections where the streets that honor them meet. An Old American town, Laramie: a relic of the America some of us still remember, from the times before America ceased to be.

Stepping out to the middle of Kearney Street in front of Number 1301, I look west 15 blocks between the double row of shade trees to the territorial railroad depot and beyond it, across the Laramie Plains, to the Snowy Range pushing up across the border from west of Estes Park, Colorado. Twelve thousand feet high and plainly visible at a distance of 40 miles, Medicine Bow Peak stands forward, a thin wall of granite holding back the western sky. In July, the rock is threaded with platinum veins of snow; elsewhere the country is a cool green, watery looking beneath the depths of blue sky where exfoliating thunderheads like pink and gold roses are blooming by early afternoon. Naturally, I had to go there—by pickup truck first, scouting for access later by horseback.

The weather was cloudy over the Laramie Plain when I started, with a powerful storm cell rupturing itself on the granite peaks. An intermittent rain began falling as I started into the foothills, changing to hail below Lake Marie and the pass at 10,847 feet. But the sky

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cleared as I came off the east slope into a different weather system and the old, familiar, westerly Wyoming of dry skies, broken sagebrush plains, and tors and outcrops of pulverizing, antelope-colored sandstone and shale.

Saratoga, with a population of only 1,969 people, has some pretty highflying ones among them. Two Lear jets and another, much larger, private one stood parked at the end of the airstrip where Ross Perot and other undesirable elements fly in occasionally for a game of golf at the country club—itself a throwback to the old Cheyenne Club of more than a hundred years ago, where gentlemen ranchers in the pay of the big British cattle companies (which operated without bothering to *own* Wyoming, including, often, the ground they built their houses and barns on) dined on champagne, caviar, and oysters, as well as elk and, of course, beef. They tried scaring the small settlers out and, when they wouldn't scare, shot or hanged them. The anti-settler campaign culminated in what is known as the Johnson County War (not to be confused with the Lincoln County War in Mexico featuring Billy the Kid and Pat Garrett) in the 1890's, when a small private army fielded by the Wyoming Stockgrowers' Association traveled by special train from Denver to Casper. Equipped with dynamite and a so-called Dead List of 70 names, it continued north toward Buffalo with the intention of blowing up the town and killing most of the inhabitants, starting with the sheriff. At the KC Ranch (now the town of Kaycee, Wyoming), they murdered two or three men on the list, but before they reached Buffalo were themselves surrounded by a counterforce from town and rescued by U.S. troops only minutes before the ranch house they were trapped in could be set afire by a flaming haywagon. (President Harrison was friendly with John Gray, the Scots chairman of one of the interested cattle companies.) As contemporary communities such as Saratoga, Jackson, and Sheridan suggest, a process of social and economic reversion seems to be overtaking the Equality State, where the natives are nearly flat broke or moved out following the wreck of the energy industry and the Great Buyup, working ranches being taken over by the megarich from all over America—indeed, all over the world. Around Laramie, too, the old ranchers are being dispossessed and replaced—by, among others, a Wal-Mart heir who has acquired already some 700,000 acres ("to run cattle on") and is said to want to make it an even million. Little billionaires never grow up; they just buy other, more expensive toys.

Because, after nearly 20 years' residency in Wyoming, I had never visited the capital of the state, and also because it's *there*, I drove 44 miles east across the Laramie Mountains to Cheyenne. Frontier Days, claimed by the city fathers to be not just the first but the longest-running rodeo in captivity (the claim is disputed by at least a couple of other contenders), was just getting under way, a special train from Denver pulling in, but even Frontier Days wasn't enough to make Cheyenne look good. The town is a dump (there's something about political cities) of 50,000 people (add another 50,000 up for the rodeo, minus a couple of thousand inhabitants smart enough to leave town for the week), depressing to look at, hot, surrounded by missile silos and grass, whose best-known feature apart from the disappointing state capitol building is the Hitching Post Lounge beside the Union Pacific tracks where, while the legislature is in session in January and February, politicians and lobbyists gather for too many drinks and who knows what other amusements. (Wyoming's sole contribution to the U.S. House of Representatives, Barbara Cubin, while a member of the state body is supposed to have taken surreptitious snapshots of her male colleagues' crotches, then posted the series on a bulletin board: Can you pin this tail on the right horse's ass . . . ?) I stopped in for a beer at the lounge, a lurid establishment in crimson-and-black, with rodeo photos on the walls and barstools upholstered like black-and-white cows, where a country-western band in mufti (T-shirts and jeans instead of cowboy shirts and hats) was rehearsing for the evening performance. Rock music is unadulterated evil, C&W just junk. Years ago, when I was learning to become a Westerner, I thought I liked some of it. Two decades later, I know better than to swallow any culture whole. In America today, you have to design and live your own culture: red wine and wilderness, hunting and books, horses and Haydn, making for happiness, if not popularity. I finished the beer and put two bits down on the bar. Leaving Cheyenne is the best way to see the place.

The horses had each dropped a shoe I discovered next day, the mare from her near front hoof, the gelding from his off front one. The farrier recommended to me was Roger Lorenzi, a local brand inspector. He turned out to be the son of Winnie and Orion Lorenzi of Kemmerer, so we hung off the tailgate of his truck for an hour after the shoeing was done, swapping stories of snowed-in hunting camps in the Wyoming and sheep camps in the Salt River Range. In Wyoming, which is just 465,000 people spread over 97,000 square miles, if you have friends in one town, you've got friends in all of them.

Newly shod and hogfat from the green grass they'd eaten since arriving from New Mexico, the horses were ready for the mountains—the *real* mountains—again. We begin with a warm-up: seven or eight miles into the foothills above Centennial. Unslowed by 200 pounds of excess weight, the gelding stepped out briskly, his hooves ringing briskly on the hollow ground between the tree roots: glad to be home again and doing what a horse likes to do (sometimes) as we climbed upward through the still lodgepole forest broken by sagebrush parks lifting above the tops of the pine trees. In the parks, I rode through the edge of quaking aspen and dismounted to search for elk sign and to pick a small bouquet of summer flowers—bluebells, Indian paintbrush, larkspur, lupin, the delicate, basin-shaped lilies whose name I didn't remember—for Renée Williams, a friend left behind in Las Cruces, where I hoped some final expiring fragrance of the northern mountains would reach her yet. From a rocky knoll, the high peaks to the west were hidden by dark green intervening ridges, but the steep long bulk of Sheep Mountain was visible to the east and so was the tawny Laramie Plain, stretching away in slanting sunlight and the dark shadow of afternoon storm clouds. Thunder echoed in the hills, a cold breeze rose, and it seemed to me, sitting the horse and staring down toward the fenced pastures and scattered houses of Centennial, that after nearly two misspent years in New Mexico, everything was finally back the way it should be—the way it was meant to be. Except I was facing in the wrong direction, east toward the High Plains rather than west to the thick granite spine of the North American Continent. Come August, when the snow finally melts out of the high country, we'll fix that, too.

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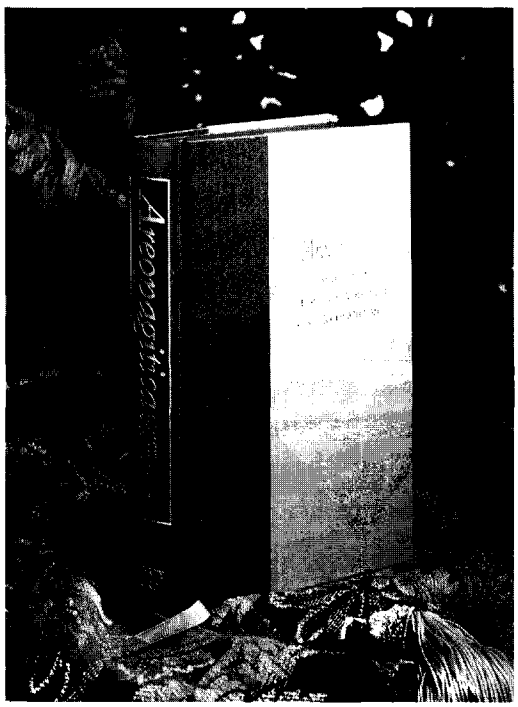
AREOPAGITICA AND OTHER POLITICAL WRITINGS OF JOHN MILTON

Foreword by John Alvis

As poet, statesman, and pamphleteer, John Milton remains one of the singular champions of liberty in the annals of history. Even in his mediations on theology Milton strove to demonstrate that liberty—of conscience—is one of the inviolable rights of free peoples. In his theological writings he seeks to unite ancient philosophy and the authority of the Judeo-Christian scriptures to support the concept of free, republican government. During the crises that wracked English life and liberties during the seventeenth century, Milton's was one of the indispensable voices and pens. He published several revolutionary manifestos, two works defending regicide, and of course the famous *Areopagitica* or defense of freedom of expression and the press against censorship. John Alvis has collected into a superb one-volume edition all of Milton's political writings of enduring importance. These include the entirety of *Areopagitica, The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, A Defence of the People of England, The Second Defence of the People of England, The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth,* and *Mr. John Milton's Character of the Long Parliament.*



John Milton (1608–1674) was the author also of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* and served as Latin secretary to Oliver Cromwell during the Commonwealth.

John Alvis is Professor of English at the University of Dallas and the Institute for Philosophic Studies.

456 + xvi pages. Foreword, note on the text, index.

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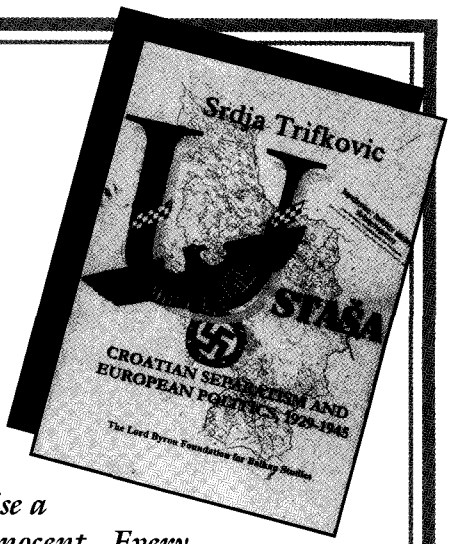

USTAŠA: CROATIAN SEPARATISM AND EUROPEAN POLITICS, 1929-1945

By Srdja Trifkovic

(London and Aiken, SC: The Lord Byron Foundation; 323 pp.; $19.00; ISBN 1-892478-01-3)

Nations cannot be invented, but even authentic nations, in asserting their identities, often rely on myths and downright lies. Up to a point such myths are harmless and exercise a positive influence. But nationalist myths are not always naive or innocent. Every nation has a record of high crimes and misdemeanors.

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—From the foreword by Dr. Thomas Fleming

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